

ACHAEMENID HISTORY XIII

series edited by
Pierre Briant, Wouter Henkelman, Amélie Kuhrt,
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Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg (†) and Josef Wiesehöfer

A PERSIAN PERSPECTIVE ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF HELEEN SANCISI-WEERDENBURG

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DARIUS III, ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND BABYLONIAN SCHOLARSHIP*

Robartus J. van der Spek – Amsterdam

*Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee (...)
Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels.
Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators,
stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.*
Prophecy over Babylon, Isaiah 47: 10, 13

*And his (Alexander's) court was thronged with diviners and priests
whose business was to sacrifice and purify and foretell the future.*
Plutarch, Alexander 75

Introduction

On 13 Elul of the fifth year of Darius III, king of Persia, king of the lands, i.e. on 20 September 331 BC, a lunar eclipse occurred in Mesopotamia one hour 10 minutes after sunset, while Saturn was present and Jupiter had set shortly before the eclipse was complete. There was a west wind during the totality of the eclipse; during its clearing the east wind blew.

* Many people have helped me and thought with me. Christopher Walker and Irving Finkel, the keepers of the cuneiform collection of the British Museum, allowed me to collate the tablets edited in this article and to publish here an unpublished fragment concerning Alexander and Arabia, which Finkel had found in the collection and of which he gave me his transliteration. I discussed nearly every line of this article with Altertumswissenschaftler Jona Lendering (www.livius.org), who gave me many valuable suggestions. Mathieu Ossendrijver provided me with astronomical information. Marten Stol saved me from a few errors in my translations of Akkadian. Amélie Kuhrt read the manuscript meticulously and made many useful suggestions; above all she tried to make my Nether-English readable. Irritatingly difficult texts, in particular Chronicle 8 and the end of the so-called *Dynastic Prophecy* led me to consult Paul-Alain Beaulieu, Pierre Briant, Giuseppe Del Monte, Mark Geller, W.F. Lambert and my colleague Jaap-Jan Flinterman. Although many problems remain unsolved, I profited enormously from these discussions. The main theses and the remaining errors, however, are my own responsibility.

For modern historians this is perhaps not an important event, worth mentioning, but for ancient man, and surely for the Babylonian historian, it was. I use the word ‘historian’ here with caution, because Babylonian historians in our meaning of the term did not exist, but there were people who made records of the past, and in this way they were ‘historians.’ The most impressive product of their scholarship is the so-called Neo-Babylonian Chronicle Series, which started in the first year of Nabonassar (747 BC) and continued into the Parthian period (after 141 BC).¹ These chronicles are not examples of beautiful historical narrative; they are rather a database. Babylonian history writing was an exact science and part of the aggregate whole of Babylonian wisdom. The Babylonian scholars viewed the world as one complex whole, in which all phenomena were interconnected and influenced each other. Thus in the Babylonian worldview the configuration of the stars, the condition of the liver of a sacrificial animal, the direction of the wind, the birth of a monstrous creature, the level of the Euphrates, the prices of commodities, the death of kings and victories in war, were all interconnected. This means that if on one occasion in the past the moon was in eclipse, while Jupiter was absent, the west wind blowing and the king had died, the king of a later period should fear the same fate if the moon was in eclipse, Jupiter absent and the west wind blowing.

To study all these relationships was the principal preoccupation of Babylonian scholars. Based on these premises they undertook their task in a remarkably modern way. They made, patiently and conscientiously, endless databases. If they had had the computer, they would certainly have used it. And so they developed astronomy into a highly sophisticated science, exemplary for the ancient world and after. To that end they made a long series of astronomical observations, of which the published and datable exemplars date from 652 to 61 BC (AD I-III). They made computations about recurring stellar constellations and predictions about lunar and solar eclipses. Aristotle was so interested in their work that he asked his nephew Callisthenes to forward to him the Babylonian astronomical observations after Alexander had entered Babylon.²

¹ The chronicles are collected in ABC chron. 1-13b and translated into French with improvements and new fragments in Glassner 1993. The latest published chronicle dates from the reign of Seleucus III (226-223 BC), but the British Museum possesses an unpublished fragment of the Arsacid period. Irving Finkel and I are currently working on new editions of the late chronicles.

² Simplicius, *In Cael.* II.12 (ad Arist., *De Caelo* 293a4); see Heiberg (ed.) 1894: 506. Exact information on the historical solar and lunar eclipses is to be found in Meeus & Mucke 1979, Mucke & Meeus 1983, and at the NASA website (<http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/eclipse.html>).

Within the framework of the astronomical diaries the Babylonian scholars recorded 'related' events: the weather, the level of the Euphrates, monstrous births, singular events (e.g., "that month, five dogs approached one bitch," AD I: 192-3, no. -207 A 'obv.' 17), damage to the temple, exploits of the king, battles, royal offerings, deaths of royal persons. They also made separate lists of historical events, which we designate chronicles, meticulously recorded facts for use in Babylonian divinatory science.

The most remarkable feature of the chronicles is their detached treatment of historical facts. It is not historiography in the sense that it gives a coherent narrative of history and searches for deeper causes; rather it presents facts about kings, their lengths of reign, their successes and defeats in battle, and facts about the city of Babylon, its temple and cult. The style is terse and is in every respect different from the royal inscriptions with their biased accounts *ad maiorem regis gloriam* (Grayson 1980: 173). The same detachment and factual treatment of history is found in the historical sections of the so-called astronomical diaries.

Last but not least, the Babylonians developed an extensive omen literature, long lists of stellar omens (the 70 tablets of the series *Enūma Anu Enlil*), liver omens, omens of singular events (*Šumma izbu*, *Šumma ālu*).³

A close relationship between these genres has often been suggested (Finkelstein 1963; Rochberg-Halton 1991: 330f.), and I think correctly so (*pace* Brinkman 1990: 95-97). It would go too far to assume that the diaries were the sole source of the chronicles, but the scribes of both genres used the same terminology. I assume that the same people wrote the chronicles, the diaries and the omens. 'History' was part of Babylonian wisdom.

Babylonian experts were always present at the courts of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. In a world in which kings were never secure due to constant warfare, the continuous threat of uprisings, palace revolts and illnesses, they were eager to know the fate the gods had ordained and had written in the stars and the livers of sacrificial animals. Moreover, Babylonian scholars were not only able to foretell the future, but also to manipulate it. The most striking example of this manipulative activity is the ritual of the substitute king. In this ritual the king was temporarily deposed and replaced by another man, usually a mentally handicapped person or a criminal. This substitute king 'ruled' for a short period, up to 100 days, after which he was executed. In this way the omen was fulfilled for the reigning king, who resumed his throne afterwards. The substitute king was enthroned in the residence of the king, who was advised to

³ Cf. Oppenheim 1977: 208-227; Reiner 1998; Koch-Westenholz 1995. A catalogue of the *Enūma Anu Enlil* series was compiled in Seleucid Uruk (Weidner 1941/42: 186-7).

stay within the confines of the palace and not to leave for the open country until the 100-day term of the eclipse was over (Parpola 1983: xxii-xxxii; Smelik 1978/79).

The role of the Babylonian and Assyrian soothsayers should not be underestimated. Their activities, their recommendations, their warnings are accessible to us through their extant letters addressed to the Assyrian kings (Parpola 1970; *idem* 1993). Reading these letters is a must for students who want to learn about Assyrian court life. They may also illuminate our understanding of court life in Babylon when Alexander resided there.

The reputation of the Babylonian scholars spread all over the world. Israelites, Greeks and Romans learned from them and accepted the ‘Chaldaean,’ as they were mistakenly called from Herodotus onwards, as experts.⁴ Granted, they were also criticized, as may be seen in the quotation from the Bible at the beginning of this article. Greek philosophers also questioned their ability, as did Anaxarchus, who advised Alexander not to listen to the Chaldaean astrologers (Diod. XVII.112.6, cf. below). But Alexander will not have read the prophet Isaiah, and it is questionable whether he was really convinced by Anaxarchus’ criticism, despite Diodorus’ assertion.

Let us return to the astronomical information for 20 September 331 with which I began this article: the lunar eclipse, the absence of Jupiter, the presence of Saturn, and the winds. The Babylonian astronomical diaries duly record it:

“[... lunar] eclipse, in its totality covered. 40th minute of the night [totality? ...] – broken (on the original) – Jupiter set; Saturn [...]; [...] during totality the west wind blew, during clearing the east wind. [...], fourth? ...; during the eclipse, death and plague.”
(AD I: 176-7, no. -330 ‘obv.’ 3’-4’)

Babylonian experts must have considered this an extremely negative omen for a reigning king. This can be inferred from the omen literature. Eclipses of sun and moon are potentially dangerous for reigning kings. However, collateral circumstances are important too, which give opportunity for divergent interpretations. The main rules are put together in the astronomical commentary *Šumma Šîn ina tāmartišu* tabl. 4: 9’-20’ (Koch-Westenholz 1995: 104-112) with the commentary of Munnabitum, a Babylonian scholar at the Assyrian court (Parpola 1993: no. 316). They are subsumed in the following table. It

⁴ Strabo XVI.1.6 made the subtle distinction between Chaldaeans as local philosophers and as a tribe of the Chaldaeans inhabiting a territory in the neighbourhood of the Arabians and the Persian Sea.

should be noted that the astrological rules are sometimes contradictory and the table is not exhaustive.

<i>Phenomenon</i>	<i>Relevance</i>
<i>Quadrants of the moon</i> ⁵ up right down left	Amurru Akkad Assyria/Subartu Elam
<i>Directions of the shadow</i> North West South East	Akkad Amurru Elam Subartu and Gutium
<i>Months</i> I, V, IX II, VI, X III, VII, XI IV, VIII, XII	Akkad Elam Amurru Subartu and Gutium
<i>Days</i> ⁶ 13th 14th 15th 16th	Akkad Elam Amurru Subartu
<i>Winds</i> North West South East	Akkad Amurru Elam Subartu and Gutium
<i>Time of the eclipse</i> evening watch middle watch morning watch	indicates plague indicates diminishing markets indicates that the sick will recover

Let us take a look at some concrete omen texts. In the first place TCL VI.13, rev. II: 16: “moon or sun are eclipsed and Jupiter is not present: end of a reign.”

⁵ According to Koch-Westenholz, the quadrants are the most important determinants; the other can be seen as supplementary (and give room for personal interpretation).

⁶ Lunar eclipses can only occur at full moon, which in the lunar calendar always take place in the middle of the month.

(Rochberg-Halton 1987a: 217; cf. Del Monte 1997: 2). This conforms to the rule that Jupiter is a positive planet, Saturn a negative (Rochberg-Halton 1988b). The presence of Jupiter would have avoided the bad omen: “if a (lunar) eclipse takes place and the planet Jupiter is present in that eclipse, the king is safe; a noble dignitary will die in his stead” (ACh 2 Spl. 29: 14; cf. letter of Munnabitum, Hunger 1992: no. 316, rev. 3; cf. Parpola 1983: xxii).

The so-called *Babylonian Astrological Calendar* reports a fitting omen for an eclipse in Elul (VI): “if in Elul (an eclipse (of the moon) occurs during the evening watch): the enemy will inflict a defeat on the land; the enemy will enjoy my possessions” (Labat 1965, §71: 7). The eclipse of 20 September (13 Elul) took place during the evening watch, the enemy, Alexander, inflicted a defeat 11 days later and Alexander plundered Darius’ possessions.

Also of interest is the following astral omen from the so-called 29th *ahû* tablet of *Enūma Anu Enlil*:

“If on either the 13th or 14th day of Ulūlu (Elul = VI) ... the moon is dark; the watch passes and it is dark; his features are dark like lapis lazuli; he is obscured until his midpoint; on the west (quadrant) as it covered, the west wind blew; the sky is dark; his light is covered; the son of the king will become purified for the throne but will not take the throne; an intruder will princes in the west; for 8 (gloss: 16) years he will exercise kingship; ...; he will conquer the enemy army; there will be abundance and riches in his path; he will continually pursue his enemy, and his luck will not run out.”

(obv. 59-61; Rochberg-Halton 1987b: 346)

Hence, the Babylonian astrologer could expect the death of a reigning king; it was a total eclipse, which would afflict all lands. The supplementary phenomena are contradictory: the 13th day would bring bad luck to Akkad, month VI bad luck for Elam, the west wind during the totality apparently meant: bad luck came from the West (an intruder), east wind during clearing: rescue for Subartu and Gutium.⁷ The eclipse took place during the evening watch, which portended plague. The diary records this phenomenon, which confirmed the rule!

If we try to view the world of 20 September 331 BC from the Babylonian perspective, we can predict that the fate of Darius III, the reigning king, the king of Persia (= Elam [month VI]), the king of (all) lands [total eclipse], was bad.

⁷ Hephaestio Thebanus argues that lands whence the winds blow at the beginning of the eclipse suffer the destruction signified by the eclipse, but winds blowing at the end of the eclipse signify good things: see Rochberg-Halton 1988a: 59 quoting Hephaestio Thebanus, *Apotelesmatica* (ed. D. Pingree, Leipzig 1973: Teubner), i.21.

The end came due to an intruder from the West [the west wind blew], but the king escaped to the East, to Gutium [during clearing the East wind blew]. It would bring the end of his reign in Elam [month VI] and in Akkad [day 13]. The intruder was expected to rule eight years.

The portent indeed came true. Eleven days later, on 1 October 331 BC, the battle of Gaugamela was fought between Darius III and an intruder from the West, Alexander the Great, and it entailed the end of the reign of Darius III. Alexander was hailed as King of Asia and King of the World. Three weeks later the new king entered Babylon and he sacrificed to Marduk. He was the new king of Akkad. Though King Darius did not die on the battlefield, he escaped to the East, to Gutium, but was killed some eight months later by his satrap Bessus. The second portent I referred to also roughly fits the situation: Alexander was an intruder, he came from the west, pursued Darius, his luck did not run out, but he had to die after eight years. Though the facts did not fit the portents completely (Darius did not die within 100 days), Babylonian scholars will have been glad with the corroboration of their scientific paradigm.

Though divination is a special preoccupation of Babylonian scholarship, it was also important in the Greek world. The Greeks knew extispicy and astrology as well. They frequently asked oracles for advice. Thus the omen of the lunar eclipse also impressed the Greeks and it was recorded by the Greek authors:

“There was an almost total eclipse of the moon, and Alexander sacrificed to the Moon, Sun and Earth, who are all said to cause an eclipse. Aristander thought that the eclipse was favourable to the Macedonians and Alexander, that the battle would take place that month, and that the sacrifices portended victory for Alexander.”⁸

(Arrian, *Anab.* III.7.6)

The fate of kings was of special concern for Babylonian diviners, and understandably so. The rise and fall of politicians still fill the pages of newspapers and history books. In addition, the kings were the employers of the diviners. And even when they were not in direct royal service, such as the Babylonian astronomers of the Hellenistic period, who lived off temple income (cf. Van der Spek 1985), they were interested in the policy of kings with respect to the upkeep of the temples.

⁸ The procedure reminds us of an old Mesopotamian divinatory practice: the eclipse was merely the announcement of a divine message, the contents of which could be discovered by extispicy.

Apart from an interest in the rise and fall of kings, the rise and fall of dynasties and empires was important for them. It was an age-old theme in Mesopotamian thinking. It is already present in the *Sumerian King List*. The gods give kingship to certain cities and later take it away and give it to other cities. Another exponent of the idea is the so called *Dynastic Chronicle* (ABC chron. 18). The concept found its way into the Bible (*Daniel*) and the classical world (Hesiod and others) as well.

The fall of empires and the rise of new ones still stir man's imagination. This certainly holds true for the fall of the Persian empire, the great slavish and effeminate 'oriental' kingdom which threatened the freedom-loving Greek civilization at Marathon (490 BC) and Thermopylae (480 BC), but which finally had to succumb to the hero from Macedon and champion of the Greeks, Alexander the Great, who brought the blessings of Hellenism to the East.

This traditional view has for a long time now been a caricature and it is widely acknowledged that much of the common opinion was created by the bias of the Greek sources. The problem, however, is that non-Greek sources are so irritatingly scarce, and the sources there are, so frustratingly difficult to understand, partly due to their bad state of preservation, partly due to the fact that the rationale of these texts is poorly understood.

The purpose of this contribution is to squeeze out a little more from them than has hitherto been done. My purpose, however, is not only to present improved editions of already published texts together with a new one, but also to express my view of the nature of these texts. My main question will be whether these texts can be used for obtaining an insight into the attitude of the Babylonian population towards their political overlords, i.e. Darius III and Alexander the Great. In addition, Alexander's opinion of Babylonian wisdom will be reviewed.

All this seems appropriate in a volume dedicated to the memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, whose main objective in her prolific oeuvre was to take heed of the non-Greek vantage point regarding the Persian empire and whose inaugural lecture (1991) was dedicated to Alexander's treatment of Persepolis. In it, she complained about the lack of first hand information, most of it being Greek reworkings of older, but lost, Greek authors. I hope she would have appreciated this presentation of materials for understanding the Babylonian view of Darius III and Alexander.

The Babylonian documents

Below, I present five cuneiform documents concerning Alexander, four published previously, one as yet unpublished. I have collated all the texts. The documents are different in nature but most, if not all, come from the world of Babylonian scholarship: an astronomical diary mentioning the battle of Gaugamela and Alexander's entry into Babylon (Text 1), a fragment referring to an address to the Babylonians relating to Arses and Alexander (Text 2), a chronicle fragment concerning Darius III and Alexander (Text 3), a chronicle fragment concerning Alexander and Arabia (Text 4), and the so-called *Dynastic Prophecy*, a document attributed to a Babylonian scholar at the Assyrian court prophesying the downfall of Assyria and the subsequent history from Nabopolassar to Alexander the Great (Text 5).

Text 1: The Battle of Gaugamela and Alexander's entry into Babylon (331 BC)

Reference – AD I: 179, no. -330 'obv.' 14'-15' and 'rev.' 3'-15' (BM 36761 + BM 36390). Photo (full-size): *ibid.* pl. 29. Copy: Wiseman 1985: 121. The Diary concerns month VI (= Elul = 8. Sept. - 7. Oct.) and month VII (= Tishri = 8. Oct. - 6. Nov.) 331 BC.

Description of the tablet – The diary consists of two tablets, which do not join. The part on which the historical information is written is the left part of a larger tablet of which at least half is lost; the thickness of the tablet at its left edge is 22 mm. rising to 30 mm at the right edge. This means that only half or even less of the left part of the tablet is preserved. From the other tablet only the upper half of the obverse is preserved. The text is clearly written and reading does not pose many problems.

Transliteration – obverse

- 14' ITU BI U₄ 11.KAM *hat-tu₄ ina ma-dàk-tu₄ ina qud-me* LUGAL GAR-m[a]
 15' *ana tar-ši* LUGAL ŠUB-ú <U₄> 24.KAM *ina še-rì* LUGAL ŠÚ *za-qip-t[u₄]*
 16' GABA *a-ha-meš im-ha-šu-ma* BAD₅.BAD₅ ^{lú}ERÍN.MEŠ *kab-t[u₄]*
 17' LUGAL ERÍN.MEŠ-šú *ú-maš-šir-ú-ši-ma ana* URU.MEŠ-šú-nu [.....]
 18' [ana K]UR *Gu-ti-i ZÁH-it-u'* (blank)

Translation

- 14' That month (VI = Elul), on the 11th (18 September 331 BC), panic occurred in the camp before the king. [*The Hanaeans*]
 15' encamped in front of the king. On the 24th (1 October 331 BC), in the morning, the king of the world [*erected his*] standard [....].

- 16' Opposite each other they fought and a heavy defeat of the troops [of the king he inflicted].
 17' The king, his troops deserted him and to their cities [...]
 18' [to the l]and of the Gutians they fled.

Comments

- 17' This word order, object – subject – verb, is typical for omens. This particular omen (“the king, his troops will abandon him”) is given in the Babylonian astrological calendar for lunar eclipses in months III, VIII and X (Labat 1965, §72: 3; §73: 8, 10).

The passage refers to the Battle of Gaugamela; Darius III is referred to as “the king,” Alexander as “the king of the world.” At the beginning of this tablet the astral phenomena discussed above are recorded. For an elaborate discussion, see Bernard 1990.

Panic occurred because of the advance of the army of Alexander. This army must have been mentioned in the break. Macedonians are often referred to as ‘Hanaeans,’ a western nomadic tribe and kingdom on the middle Euphrates in the Middle Babylonian period (cf. Text 3). This belongs to the archaizing tendency of diaries and chronicles in rendering geographic names. This makes them more useful for comparison with omens. The same holds true for “Gutians” (people living to the east of the Tigris) in line 18'.

Transliteration – reverse

- 3' [I]TU BI TA 1 E[N]
 4' ana E.KI GIN-ku um-ma É.SAG.ÍL¹ [.....]
 5' u DUMU.MEŠ E.KI a-na NÍG.GA É.SAG.ÍL [.....]
 6' 'U₄¹ 11.KAM ina URU UD.KIB.NUN.KI tē-e-mu šá^m A-l[ek-sa-an-dar-ri-is]
 7' [um-m]a² a-na É.MEŠ-ku-nu ul er-ru-ub U₄ 13.KA[M]
 8' [KÁ.SI]KIL.LA KÁ ka-mi-i šá É.SAG.GÍL ù .. [.....]
 9' [.. ..] U₄ 14.KAM^{lu} Ia-ma-na-a-a MU-tim GU₄ [.....]
 10' [.. TI] (blank) LUGÚD.DA.MEŠ^{uzi} ME.HÉ.ME[Š]
 11' [U₄ ..-KAM^m] A-lek-sa-an-dar-ri-is LUGAL ŠÚ ana E.KI K[U₄²]
 12' [ANŠE.KU]R.RA.MEŠ ù ù-'nu-ut¹ [.....]
 13' [.. ..] u DUMU.MEŠ E.KI u UN.'MEŠ¹ [.....]
 14' [.. .. KU]Š šī-piš-tú ana [.....]
 15' [.. .. x] x um-ma x[.....]

Translation

- 3' That month (VII = Tishri), from the 1st until [..... . On the nth day Greeks]
 4' came to Babylon (saying) as follows: “Esagila [will be restored]
 5' and the Babylonians to the treasury of Esagila [their tithe will give.]”

- 6' On the 11th day (18 October 331) in Sippar an order of Al[exander to the Babylonians was sent]
 7' [as follow]s: "Into your houses I shall not enter." On the 13th day (20 October 331) [*Greeks* entered]
 8' [the Siki]la gate, the outer gate of Esagila and [*they prostrated*]
 9' [*themselves*]. The 14th day (21 October), these Greeks a bull, [.....]
 10' [*n*] short [ribs, *n*] fatty tissues (of the intestines as sacrifice) [.... sacrificed.]
 11' [On the *n*th day] Alexander, the king of the world, entered Babylon [...]
 12' [... Hor]ses and equipment [...]
 13' [...] and the Babylonians and the people [of the land ...]
 14' [...] a parchment letter to [*the Babylonians* ...]
 15' [...] as follows: ["..."]

Comments

- 4'-9' The restorations are speculative, but we know that it was Alexander's plan to rebuild Esagila (Arr., *Anab.* VII.17.2), and we know that Babylonians did pay tithes to the treasury of Esagila for the specific purpose of removing the debris of Esagila (cf. Del Monte 1997: 13-17 with n. 41; Jursa 1998: 73f). That high functionaries enter the temple "and prostrate themselves" is a recurring theme in the diaries.
 10' Cf. VAS VI 268: 3 and 7 = NRV 842, the "rations of the king for the goddess Išhara" contain, among other things, 10 short ribs of the bull and 5 fatty tissues of the sheep (I owe this reference to M. Stol). Compare also the ritual for the renovation of a temple from Uruk TCL 6 46: obv. 4 (Linssen 2002: 300).

As is usual in the diaries, the purpose of the astronomer is to give bare facts. Value judgments seldom occur. The bare facts are fairly favourable for Alexander in this respect. He is the victor and he respects the cult of Marduk. Babylonians will pay their tithes to the temple (of interest perhaps to the temple, less so to the Babylonians).

Outright value judgments are not attested, unless it is that Alexander is called "king of the world" and Darius only "king;" but this can also be seen as a 'bare fact,' since Alexander was hailed 'king of Asia' by his troops after Gaugamela (cf. Fredericksmeier 2000) and Darius was indeed reduced to 'a king' among others. An interesting 'fact' mentioned by the diary is that it holds that Darius was deserted by his troops instead of the other way around, as is maintained by Arrian (*Anab.* III.13.3), but Curtius (IV.15.28-33) and Diodorus (XVII.60.3) present the same picture as the diary.

Text 2: Fragment referring to Arses and Alexander

Reference – BM 36613 = Sachs 1977: 144-7 (with full-scale photo).

Description of the tablet – No edges are preserved, one side is destroyed. The text is clearly written, in the same style and same size and form of the signs and lines, as the previous text.

Transliteration

- 2' [.....]x ina IZI[?] [.....]
 3' [.....]-ú u^{lú}ERÍN.MEŠ [.....]
 4' [.....] x šá ŠU^{II}-šú SAHAR.HI.A TA x [.....]
 5' [.....] x id-de-ku-ú U₄-mu [.. .. .]
 6' [..... MU x K]AM^mÁr-šú A šá^mÚ-ma-kuš šá^mÁr-tak-šat-s[u MU-šú
 na-bu-ú]
 7' [.....] KU₄-ú ù É^dA-nu-ni-tu₄ lib-bi Er[i-du₁₀.KI]
 8' [.....^mA-lek-sa-an]-dar-ri-is LUGAL GAL {x} DÙ-u' at-tu-nu DUMU.MEŠ
 E.[KI]
 9' [..... M]EŠ u É.MEŠ ana NÍG.GA É.SAG.GIL u DUMU.MEŠ E.KI
 GU[R.MEŠ[?]]
 10' [.....] É.SAG.GIL DÙ-uš-u' ú-qu [.....]
 11' [..... ERI]N.MEŠ i-šu-tu ..[.....]
 12' [.....]'r .. '[.....]

Translation

- 2' [.....] with fire (??) [.....]
 3' [.....] ... and the troops [.....]
 4' [.....] ... of his own hands the debris from ... [.....]
 5' [.....] they removed. Day [.....]
 6' [..... year *n*] of Arses, son of Ochos, who [is called] Artaxerxes
 7' [... *some people your houses*] entered and the temple of Anunitu inside (the district of) Er[idu]
 8' [..... *at the command of* (?) Alexan]der, the great king, they built. (As for you Babylonians,
 9' [... the] and the houses to the possession of Esagila and the Babylonians they retur[ned]
 10' [..... of] Esagila they made. The army [...
 11' [.....] few [troo]ps [.....
 12'

Comments – Unfortunately this text is very enigmatic, but a few important points emerge. It seems to be (a reference to) a letter to the Babylonians (“you Babylonians,” l. 8'), in which mention is made of some historical facts from the

days of Arses and Alexander regarding temples and houses. This means that the tablet may well be post-Alexander. One option is that it was written at the time of the restorations of Esagila and Ezida by Seleucus I and Antiochus I (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991), and that earlier work by the great Alexander was remembered, such as the fact that the troops of Alexander had removed the rubble of Esagila, that he had promised to return houses to the possessions of the temple and the Babylonians.⁹

The temple of Anunitu was in Babylon in the district of Eridu, i.e. the temple district (George 1992: 59, Tablet IV: 14: *é-sag-gá-šár-ra É^dA-nu-ni-tum lib-ba eri-du*_{10.KI}). Arrian (*Anab.* III.16.4) does indeed claim that Alexander ordered the rebuilding of more temples (τὰ ἱερὰ) apart from the temple of Bēl. The reading *lib-bi* UR[U UD.KIB.NUN.KI], “within the cit[y of Sippar]” is an option too, and reasonable, since a temple of Anunitu was situated in Sippar, but in my view this fragment concerns primarily Babylonian matters.

Glassner translated lines 7'-8': “... and the temple of Anunitu within which Alexander had built.” This is certainly possible, but I consider the verbs *id-de-ku-ú* (5'), KU₄-ú (7'), DÜ-u' (8'), GU[R.MEŠ] (9') and DÜ-uš-u' (10') parallel verbs with the same subject: “they.”

If this tablet really is a letter written by a later Seleucid king, it must be seen as royal propaganda, not as representing a genuine Babylonian view.

Text 3: Chronicle concerning Darius III and Alexander (Chronicle 8)

Reference – ABC chron. 8. Transcription and translation: *ibid.* 112-3; photo pl. XVII (BM 36304). French translation: Glassner 1993: 205-207 (Chr. 29). Copy by S. Smith in CT 37, 22.

Description of the tablet – The fragment is the right part of a large tablet of which at least the left half (but probably more) is broken off. Only a few signs seem to be lost at the right edge. The length of the longest line of the obverse is 6 cm, the length of the longest line of the reverse is 4.5 cm. The thickness of the middle of the tablet measures 26 mm at the right edge and 32 mm at the left edge. Thus, the lines were fairly long, unless we assume it to have been a two-columned tablet. If my interpretation of obv. 3'-4' is correct, we must assume that the tablet had two columns on both sides, so that columns II and III are

⁹ Compare the astronomical diary, Text 1. Note that in this diary mention is made of three messages of Alexander to the Babylonians: lines 3'-5', concerning Esagila; 7', the promise not to enter houses; 14'-15', unknown content.

preserved. Then we can also calculate the missing part on the left side of the columns, viz. ca. 5-7 signs. Not too much seems to be lost at the lower edge. The tablet curves to a thickness of 23 mm at the lower edge. The upper side has a thickness of 25 mm.

BM 36304 (Text 3)



Perhaps some remarks concerning the dividing lines are in order. Clear dividing lines are drawn after obv. 2', 10', 13', 16' and rev. 1', 5', 6', 8', 11' and 12'. Obv. 8' is written between thin, hardly visible dividing lines. At the end of obv. 11' a line is drawn to mark the remaining blank space. The line after rev. 5' may have had the same function.

In chronicles dividing lines usually mark years of reign. If this was the case in our tablet too, it would mean that many years are reported in this chronicle. If it is true that the beginning of the tablet starts with the beginning of Alexander's reign, then on the reverse the beginning of the war of the Diadochi would be reported. That would duplicate the beginning of chronicle 10, which, however, does not seem to be the case. There are, however, also some chronicles in which dividing lines mark new months (BM 34428 unpubl.). I assume that in this chronicle, at least in some cases, dividing lines introduce nothing at all (perhaps the thin lines before and after obv. 8') or only months.

Transliteration – obverse

- 1' [... .. x x]
 2' [... ..] (blank)
-
- 3' [MU ... ITI ŠU² ina ^{giš}G]U.ZA-šú *id-de-ku-šú* ^mbi-^re¹-[*es²-su²*]
 4' [*šá* ^m*Ar-tak-šat-su* (?)] MU-šú MU-[']u ^mu {DIŠ over erasure} *a-lik-sa u* ERÍN-
 [MEŠ-šú]
 5' [... .. ERÍN]-MEŠ-šú *i-su-tu* TA ^{lú}ERÍN.ME[Š ..]
 6' [... .. x x i] *d-duk* ^{lú}ERÍN *ha-ni-e* ^{lú}ERÍN.MEŠ-šú *š[á]*
 7' [... ..] AN ^rRA²¹ [...] ^m*da-ri¹-ia-a-muš* LUGAL GIN [MEŠ²]
-
- 8' [ITI NE² U]₄ 15 ^m*ki-di-nu* ina ^{giš}TUKUL GAZ KIN U₄ [... ..]
-
- 9' [... ..] KUR *ú-zu-ia-a-nu* URU *šá* KUR *gu-ti-i*
 10' [...] (blank)
-
- 11' [... .. TA] É.GAL E.KI *ul-te-su* NÍG.^rŠU.MEŠ *š^r1-na-ti*
 12' [... .. ana] *e-pe-šú šá* GÍŠ² x [...] ^ra¹ [..]
 13' [... ..] ana *e-pe-šú šá* ^rEZEN¹ *šá* ^dEN ana DUMU.M[EŠ E.KI SUM-
 'u]
-
- 14' [... ..] ^dEN ^rA-šú¹ *a-na mu-ma-'-ir-[ú-tu]*
 15' [*ip-qid*] ^rHUL-ti ana¹ LU[GAL] ^rik-pu-du¹
 16' [... ..] (blank)
-
- 17' [... ..] *ar* .[.]
 (remainder broken off)

Reverse

- 1' [.....] (blank)
-
- 2' [... ..] x *ina* GÍŠ TUKUL x [... ..]
 3' [... ..] x *ip-qid* ITU BI 1-en [... ..]
 4' [... ..] x ^m*pi-ta-nu* ^{lú}ERÍN[MEŠ-šú]
 5' [... ..] URU/ÍD UD.KIB.NUN.KI A.MEŠ-šú *a-na* [... ..]
-
- 6' [... ..] (blank)
-
- 7' [... ..] *ip-qid*² NÍG.ŠU.MEŠ *u mim-ma šip-ri* AN x [... ..]
 8' [... ..] *na-din* (blank)
-
- 9' [... ..] MAH-tum ina KA ^m*Al¹-pu-ul-us¹*-[*su*]
 10' [ana PN ^{lú}*Ia-ma-n*]*a²-a-a* SUM-[']u U₄ 10.KAM ^rx x x¹ [... ..]
 11' [... ..] ina KA LUGAL TAR (erasure)

12' [... .. -s]u² ú-mar-ri ma-dak-ta-šú ŠUB-d[i ..]

13' [... .. .K]UR ¹ma-ak¹-ka-du-nu [...]
(remainder broken off)

Translation – obverse

3' [Year 330² month IV² from] his [thr]one they removed him. Be[ssos²],
4' [whom Artaxerxes²] as his name they named, and Alexa(nder) and his troops
5' [..... with] his few [troop]s from the troops [..... (...)]
6' [(...)] he killed/defeated. The Hanaean troops, his troops wh[ich]
7' [..... from] ¹Babylon² ¹[to?] Darius, the king, went.

8' [Month v² d]ay 15 (14 Aug.²) Kidinnu was killed by the sword. In the
month Elul (VI = 28 Aug. – 26 Sep.), on the [*n*th] day

9' [..... in] the land of ú-zu-ia-a-nu, a city of the land of Gutium,
10' [.....].

11' [Year 329² ... month ... from] the palace of Babylon they brought out, ¹their
(*fem.*) goods¹ [(...)]
12' [..... for] the making of the xx [... .. .]
13' [.....] for the performance of the festival of Bēl to the
[Babylon]ians [they gave].

14' [Year 328²]-Bēl, ¹his son(?)¹, to the office of satrap
15' [they/he appointed] evil to the ki[ng] they plotted.
16' [...]

17' [...] x [...]

Reverse

1' [...]

2' [.....] with the sword [...]
3' [.....] he appointed. That month, a certain [...]
4' [.....]x *pi-ta-nu*, his troop[s]
5' [he assembled,] the Euphrates/Sippar his sons/its water to [...]

6' [...] (blank)

7' [Month he appoi]nted(?). The valuables and whatever artifact(?) ... [...]
8' [...] was given. (blank)

-
- 9' [Month] numerous [...] at the command of Alpulus[su ...]
 10' [..... to PN, the Gree]k, they gave. Day 10th, (*erasure*) [...]
 11' [.....] at the command of the king it was cut off (*erasure*) (blank).
-
- 12' [.....] his camp he pitched [...]
-
- 13' [...] Macedon [...]
-

Comments

- 3' ^mBi-^re¹-[...] Grayson read: *ana bi-x*[...]. In view of line 4', I assume that a personal name is at issue. The name Bessos (^mBi-*e-es-su*?) would fit the year 330 BC.
- 4' MU = *nabû*, “to name”. *nabû* is in this kind of construction usually rendered by SA₄, but cf. *Prophecy A*, first side, II: 14, MAN-*ma šá* MU-*šú* NU MU (Grayson & Lambert 1964: 12). If Bessos is intended, [*šá* ^mAr-*tak-šat-su*] MU-*šú* MU-*u*’, “[whom Artaxerxes] as his name they named]” is to be expected at the beginning of line 4', since Bessos took that name when he deposed Darius as king. My calculation of the length of the missing left parts of the other lines is based on this reconstruction. See also below.
- 4' *a-lik-sa*. The reading presents no doubts. It can only refer to the royal name Alexander in abbreviated form. Abbreviations of royal names occur more often in chronicles and diaries. The name of Alexander may have been written in full in the previous paragraph, which may have described the battle of Gaugamela.
- 6' *idduk* means either “he defeated” or “he killed.” It may refer to the death of Darius III at the hands of Bessos or to a defeat of Bessos’ troops by Alexander (see below).
- 6' *ha-ni-e* is the name of a people and a kingdom (Hana) of the Old- and Middle-Babylonian periods situated on the middle Euphrates. It is also mentioned in the Agum-kakrime Inscription (Agum returns Marduk and Sarpanitum from the grasp of the Hanaeans, II: 1-11); Longman assumes this composition to be Neo-Assyrian and Hanî to be the literary equivalent of Hatti (Longman 1991: 86-7), but Podany takes it simply to be the Middle-Babylonian kingdom of Hana (Podany 1991-3; 2002). In the Hellenistic period the term is apparently a metaphor of Macedon, or by extension Greeks and Macedonians (cf. Briant 1994).
- 7' At the beginning of line 7' traces of DINGIR (certainly) and RA (possibly) are discernible, which could point to KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI = Babylon. It is a little disturbing that Babylon is written as E.KI in line 11' of this chronicle, and it hardly fits the context.
- 7' ^mDa-*ri*¹-*ia-a-muš*: Grayson assumed that Darius I was the protagonist, but we can now be certain that Darius III was meant (so Glassner 1993: 206).

- 7' Grayson and Glassner read *šār šarr[āni^{meš}]*, i.e. LUGAL LUG[AL.MEŠ], “king of kings.” The second LUGAL, however, appears to be DU or GIN = *alāku*, “to go.”
- 8' Kidinnu must have been a man of some importance. He is mentioned without any familial or professional designation. It is tempting to see in him the famous astronomer Kidēnas who was familiar enough to the scribes of Babylon and probably lived in the fourth century.
- 9' Although the line is written after a thin dividing line, it can hardly introduce a new year, or even a month, since the line must be a continuation of line 8'. Grayson's reading URU *Ia-a-nu* does not fit the traces. A reading *zu* instead of URU is practically certain. KUR seems fairly clear, though the sign is at the beginning of the break. My reading *ú* is not quite unequivocal. Two vertical wedges are clear which would point to *si*, but very close study of the sign reveals two more thin vertical wedges, which makes the sign an *ú*. That the signs KUR (‘land’) and URU (‘city’) are used interchangeable may be surprising, but occurs elsewhere in the chronicles and the diaries: ABC chron. 3: 2 KUR *Hi-in-da-na-a*; 3: 9 URU *Hi-in-da-nu*; ABC chron. 6: 4 URU *Hu-me-e* for Cilicia; ABC chron. 5: rev. 12 URU *Ia-a-hu-du* for Judah; Diary AD III: 416-7, no. -95 A 10' and 418-9 no. -95 C rev. 6' URU *Ar-mi-ni(-i)* for Armenia; AD I: 60, no. -440 (= -381c): ‘rev.’ 4' KUR *Sa-mi-né-e* URU SIG-ú *šá* KUR *Ku-up-ru*, “the land of Salamis, a famous city of the land of Cyprus.”

I cannot find an interpretation for the geographical name *uzuianu*, which was in the land of Gutium, i.e. any land east of the Tigris. In August-September 330 BC Alexander was in Hyrcania, Parthia and Aria.

- 11'-3' These lines may deal with Alexander's next regnal year, i.e. 329 BC. The central point is that goods are taken from the palace apparently to be used for the temple cult. There may be an echo of this message in the astronomical diary of month VIII of year 8 of Alexander in which it is stated that in November 329 something “[from] the king's palace they took to that house (or: temple)” (AD I: 191, no. -328 ‘rev.’ 26').
- 14' If after this clear dividing line again a new year was introduced, we are now in 328/27 BC. It is the year that the satrap Mazaeus died (winter 328/7; Arr., *Anab.* IV.18.3; Curt. VIII.3.17; Berve 1926 II: no. 484). If so, the person named [...]Bēl, who was appointed satrap, might be a son of Mazaeus. Classical authors report that Mazaeus had several sons, three (or two) of which are mentioned by name, viz. Artiboles (Berve 1926 II: no. 154), Antibelus or Brochubelus (Berve 1926 II: no. 82). All three names are Babylonian: Ardi-Bēl, Iddin-Bēl (? or also Ardi-Bēl?) and Buraqu-Bēl. Brochubelus was “at one time” *praetor* of Syria (*Syriae quondam praetor*,

Curt. v.11.13). *Quondam* does not necessarily refer to the past,¹⁰ which would mean that he could have been appointed governor of Syria at a later date by Alexander, possibly as successor to Asclepiodorus, who left the satrapy in 329 BC (cf. Berve 1926 I: 258 and II: 88). According to Plut., *Alex.* 39, Alexander wished to give an unnamed son of Mazaeus a second satrapy.

It is very difficult to interpret and date this chronicle, although it is now certain that the Darius in line obv. 7' is Darius III, not Darius I. The events which seem easiest to date are those described in 3'-7'. There are several elements in this section, which seem to refer to events of the summer of 330 BC, the year after the battle of Gaugamela. The dethronement (line 3') of someone may provide the clue. The only dethronements I can imagine are those of Arses in 336 BC, which seems too early, since Alexander was not at that stage in Asia, and the imprisonment of Darius III by Bessos, satrap of Bactria and Sogdiana, Nabarzanes, chiliarch of Darius, and Barsaentes, satrap of Arachosia and Drangiana in Thara (Arr., *Anab.* III.21.1; Curt. v.12.4, 15). Alexander was told this, just after passing the Caspian gates (end of June 330 BC; cf. Brunt 1976: 494-5). Darius III was killed shortly after, in early July (*ibid.* 497), near Hecatompylos, by Satibarzanes and Barsaentes on the order of Bessos (Arr., *Anab.* III.21.9-10; Diod. XVII.73.2; Curt. v.13.13; Plut., *Alex.* 42; *Itiner.* 69; Ps.Call. II.20; Jul.Val. II.31). Bessos returned to Bactria and prepared for war against Alexander. He assumed the royal tiara and declared himself successor to Darius under the throne name Artaxerxes (Arr., *Anab.* III.25.3; Diod. XVII.74.2, 83.7; Curt. VI.6.13).

The "few troops" of line 5 may refer to the small army with which Alexander pursued Bessos (Arr., *Anab.* III.21.2, 7). According to Arrian, Satibarzanes and Barsaentes wounded Darius when Alexander was right upon them, left him where he was and escaped. "Darius died of his wound soon after, before Alexander had seen him" (Arr., *Anab.* III.21.10). Quintus Curtius (v.13.24-5), Plutarch (*Alex.* 43) and Justin (XI.15), however, have Darius still alive when found by the Macedonians.

I have also tried the hypothesis that in line 8'-10' the battle of Gaugamela was mentioned, which took place on 24 Elul. That would mean that in line 3' no reference to Bessos is made, that the second name of line 4' would refer to "[Artashata, whom Darius] as his name they named," line 7' would then refer to the departure of Darius in the direction of Gaugamela, Kidinnu may have been

¹⁰ Cf. Livy I.39.3: Tanaquil to her husband after the prodigy of the child with the flames around the head: *scire licet hunc lumen quondam rebus nostris dubiis futurum*; also attested in Vergil (suggestion C.H.M. Kroon, Amsterdam).

executed for giving a negative prediction on the basis of the lunar eclipse of 13 Elul, the battle may have been mentioned in the same line as having taken place on “Elul, day [24],” after which Darius fled to “the land Uzuianu, a city of the land of Gutium,” which would fit nicely the information of the diary, though one would expect Ecbatana, rather than Uzuianu. Lines 11'-13' would then refer to Alexander's arrival in Babylon. This would also explain why Darius is called king in line 7', while Alexander is not in line 4'.

Attractive though this reconstruction may be, some puzzles remain. Who was removed from the throne before Gaugamela? Who was Bi-e-[...]? Or do we have to read *ana bi-x*-[...]? Who was defeated or killed in line 6'?

Reverse – The reverse is even more difficult to date. There are few clues. There is no indication of the death of a king, so I assume, in view of the fact that only a small section of the lower part of the tablet was lost, that we are still in the reign of Alexander. The best clue for a date is the reference to a man named Alpulus[su ..], which could be a clumsy rendering of Harpalus. Grayson read here a Babylonian name (^m*Nabû-bu-ul-li*-[...]), but the reading *Al-pu-ul-us*-[...] must be considered certain. If indeed Harpalus is concerned, then line 9' belongs to February 324 BC at the latest, when Harpalus fled from Babylon (cf. Badian 1961). Another candidate for this name is (a hypocoristic of) Apollodorus of Amphipolis who was appointed *strategos* alongside Mazaeus the satrap (Arr., *Anab.* III.16.4) and who was still in office in 323 BC, when Alexander returned to Babylon (Arr., *Anab.* VII.18.1; Plut., *Alex.* 73).

Further comments

- 2'-3' Reference to an execution and an appointment may relate to the purge of satraps Alexander carried out in December 325 BC (Bosworth 1988: 240; Badian 1961: 16-18). In March 324 he arrived in Susa and executed the satrap Abulites. However, it is sobering to note that on the obverse the execution of a certain Kidinnu is mentioned, of whom we would know nothing, if his name had been lost in a break.
- 4' The reference to a person named Pitanu seems promising. With a little fantasy we may detect the name Peithon here, but which Peithon this could have been and which troops and for what he assembled them is difficult to guess. But doubts are in order. The vertical wedge before the name, which I interpreted as a 'Personenkeil' may also be part of a larger sign of which traces exist, e.g. *qa*. If a Peithon is concerned then Peithon the son of Crateuas seems the best candidate (Berve 1926 II: no. 621). He was in Babylon with Alexander at the time of the latter's death. What he did at this period is unknown, except that he slept in the temple of Serapis in order to find out the god's will with respect to Alexander's illness (Arr., *Anab.*

- vii.25.2).¹¹ After Alexander's death he became satrap of Media and was given the task of subduing the revolt of the Greek colonists in Bactria by Perdiccas. The mustering of troops for the expedition against the rebellious Greeks in Bactria may be at issue. If so, the reverse of the tablet describes events after the death of Alexander, but then a reference to "the king," who gives orders in line 11' is odd, there being no kings to give orders.
- 5' UD.KIB.NUN.KI can be the Euphrates or Sippar and A.MEŠ can mean 'sons' as well as 'water,' which makes the sentence very difficult to understand.
- 7' *mim-ma šip-ri* AN: Grayson read *mim-ma ana aš-ri*^dX, "and whatever for the emplacement of god X," which is also possible.
- 9'-10' As argued above, these lines may refer to the activities of Harpalus or Apollodorus. Harpalus was a treasurer of the central satrapies based at Babylon (τῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι θησαυρῶν καὶ τῶν προσόδων τὴν φυλακὴν πεπιστευμένος, Diod. XVII.108.4). He lived in a regal style in the royal palace and spent a lot of money. Lines 7'-10' may then refer to his requisitions. In particular lines 9'-10' report an event which shows remarkable similarity to the transaction recorded by BM 79001, dated to the 4th year of Antigonos, 314 BC, in which 3 minas of silver in staters of Alexander "was disbursed from the property of Bēl on the orders of *Ka-li-nu-uk-su* (Kallinikos?), the Greek, the *azdakarri*, who is in charge of the treasury, for food for *Du-ru-uk²-ti-i-di* (Dorokteides??), the Greek" (Stolper 1993: 82-86). This Kallinikos may well be a later successor to Harpalus.
- 11' The cuneiform sign TAR can represent both *parāsu* and *nakāsu*, "to cut off."
- 12' *umarri*: This word seems to be a verb derived from the D-stem of *arû* (cf. CAD A II, 317 s.v. *arû* C), "to cut branches." This is, in this context, not very likely. The signs may also be part of a personal name if the last vertical wedge of the suggested *s]u* were a 'Personenkeil,' or if a name ...*s]umarri* were at issue. The phrase "his camp he pitched" may refer to Alexander's encamping of the army at Opis (August 324 BC; Arr., *Anab.* VII.12.3).
- 13' The name *Makkadunu* (Macedon) occurs in two chronicles: ABC chron. 10: 8, "[The king (= Philip III)] returned to Macedon;" 10: 13, "Philip III was in Macedon [...];" ABC chron. 12, rev. 3: Seleucus marches to Macedon, "his land." The gentilicium "Macedonian" (*Makkadunaia*) is used for Seleucus I

¹¹ The temple of Serapis must be the temple of Marduk. It is the only sensible place and Ptolemy, Arrian's source, evidently equated this head of the Babylonian pantheon with his own creation: Serapis. Another argument may be found in Plutarch (*Alex.* 73), where the poor stranger who was destined for the role of substitute king was said to have been released by Serapis. In this case too, it can only have been done by the clergy of Bēl (cf. Bosworth 1988: 172).

in the building inscription of Antiochus I (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991: 75, 1: 5). The context of the word here is completely lost.

Text 4: Chronicle concerning Alexander and Arabia

Reference – BM 41080 (unpublished).

Description of the tablet – Small fragment. Height: 50 mm, width 35 mm. Reverse destroyed.

Transliteration

- 1' [... *ma-dak*]-*ta*-¹*šú*¹ ŠUB [.....]
 2' [... ÍD ...] ¹*i*-*bir-nim-ma* LUGAL [.....]
 3' [... ÍD.MAŠ.G]Ú.GAR GABA *a-ha-meš* [.....]
 4' [... ^{lú}ERÍN.MEŠ *Ha-n*]-*i-e ana* KUR *A-ra-bi* [.....]
 5' [.....]... NÍG.BA UN KUR MAH [.....]
 6' [... E.K]I *u* ^{lú}ERÍN LUGAL TA ¹E¹.[KI]
 7' [... ^m*A-li*]-*k-sa-an-d*[*ar* LUG]AL [.....]
 8' [..... -*d*]-*a-qa ana* ^{lú}DUMU¹?.MEŠ [E.KI]
 9' [.....] x x *ina* KÁ.GAL ¹x¹[.....]
 10' [.....] ^dEN *u* ^dAG [.....]

Translation

- 1' [.....] he pitched his [cam]p [.....]
 2' [.....] they² crossed [the river *Tigris*] to this side. The king [.....]
 3' [... on the river Ti]gris opposite each other [.....]
 4' [... Han]ean [troops] to the land of Arabia [.....]
 5' [.....] ... numerous gifts of the people of the land [.....]
 6' [... Babyl]on[?] and the troops of the king from Ba[bylon]
 7' [... Ale]xand[er, the ki]ng [.....]
 8' [... Perd]iccas^{??} to the citizens [of Babylon]
 9' [.....] ... in the gate ..[.....]
 10' [.....] Bēl and Nabu [.....]

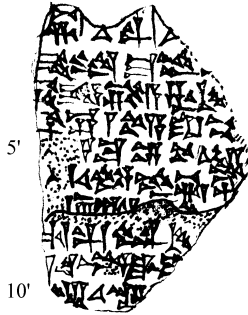
Comments – This fragment probably deals with the second entry of Alexander the Great into the city of Babylon, but the condition of the tablet hardly allows firm conclusions.

The crossing of the Tigris may refer to Alexander's crossing, when he came from the East early in 323 BC. Apparently, he pitched his camp there. He was met there by Babylonian astrologers (see below). The form *ibirnimma* is

problematical. *Ibir* is singular, but *nim* is the ventive ending of the 3rd person plural.

Our fragment speaks about numerous gifts of the people (line 5'). This may be reflecting Diodorus' remark about Alexander's entry into Babylon (XVII.112.6): "As on the previous occasion, the population received the troops hospitably, and all turned their attention to relaxation and pleasure, since everything necessary was available in profusion."

BM 41080 (Text 4)



Interesting to note is the reference to the preparations for war against Arabia, preparations which were made at Babylon already before Alexander arrived there (Arr., *Anab.* VII.19.3-20.10; cf. Strabo XVI.1.11). If we may believe Strabo XVI.4.27, Alexander even intended "to make it his royal abode after his return from India." If this intention was known in Babylon, it must have displeased the Babylonian priesthood, who would have remembered Nabonidus, who made Thaema (Teima) in Arabia his royal abode and who neglected the cult of Marduk, even trying to promote the cult of Sin there (Beaulieu 1989: 43-65).

Perdiccas was already in Babylon before Alexander arrived, since he had gone there with the body of Hephaestion in order to build his funeral pyre (Arr., *Anab.* VII.14; Plut., *Alex.* 72; Just. XII.12.11; Diod. XVII.110.8). Possibly Perdiccas made an announcement to the population of Babylon and referred to his promise to rebuild the sanctuary of Bēl.

The entrance by Alexander seems to be mentioned in line 9'. It is frustrating that no clear name of a gate is mentioned. The traces point to the beginning of *i*, which could be part of *i-ru-ub*, "he entered," but entering through a gate is in Akkadian not construed with *ina*. Actually, the name of the gate is expected, but no name of a gate fits the traces.

Text 5: The Dynastic Prophecy

Reference – BM 40623; BHLT, ch. 3. Full-scale copy: *ibid.* 28-29; transcription and translation: 30-37; cf. Lambert 1978.

Description of the tablet – The preserved fragment (100 x 75 mm) must be only a tiny part of a large tablet, containing poor remnants of two columns on both sides. The thickness of the lower edge is 25 mm and increases to 30 mm at the upper edge and the curvature of the tablet shows no decreasing. This means that at least the upper half of the tablet is lost, if not more. This is also borne out by

the content of the tablet, as we shall see below. Lambert has shown that (at least) one column on both sides was lost, so that only columns I, II, V and VI are preserved. The left part of col. II corresponds with the left part of col. III (Grayson) = V (Lambert) and this feature was made clear by a line on the uninscribed bottom edge which connects as it were the beginnings of the lines of both columns.

I tried to reconstruct the width of the columns, or the length of the lines. On average they must have contained eleven signs and measured ca. 4.5 cm. I deduce this from the lines where we can gain an idea of a complete line in the phrases: x-ta MU.AN.NA.MEŠ LUGAL-ú-tu DÜ-uš = “For x years he will exercise kingship” in I: 25' and II: 6'; V: 4 and 8. In column VI: 7-8 this expression seems to be stretched out over two lines in view of the blank space before DÜ-uš in 8 and the traces in 7 which allow a reading [... MU.AN.N]A.M[EŠ]. The number of eleven signs per line is evidently an approximation: some signs are larger than others, at some instances parts of the lines are left blank, I: 16', 17', 18', 19'; II: 10', 15'; V: 3, 7, 15, 16, 21; VI: 8. In the transliteration I have marked the length of the gap by two dots per lost sign.

Transliteration

col. I.

(lacuna of ca. 25 lines or more)

- 1' [.. .. in-ni(?)]-in-ni
 2' [.. .. in(?)]-ni-in-ni
 3' [.. .. a-na ár-kát U₄]-mu e-zib
 4' [.. .. DINGIR.MEŠ] GAL.MEŠ
 5' [.. .. i]-qul-ma
 6' [.. .. i]-mur

-
- 7' [.. .. ár-kát U₄-mu
 8' [.. .. is-sa-kip
 9' [.. .. i]g-gam-mar
 10' [.. .. e-mu-q]u KUR Aš-šur.KI
 11' [.. .. x KUG.GA-ú
 12' [.. .. ZI-am-ma
 13' [.. .. T]IN.TIR.KI ZI-am-ma
 14' [.. .. is-sa-ak-ki-pi
 15' [.. .. ú]-nu-tu ÍL-ma
 16' [.. .. x (blank) GIN-ma
 17' [.. .. (blank) i-šab-bat
 18' [.. .. (blank) i-naq-qar
 19' [.. .. (blank) i-sa-am-ma-ak

- 20' [šil-la-tum ka-bit]-tum ana TIN-TIR.KI ú-še-reb
 21' [... .. É.SAG.ÍL] ù É.ZI.DA
 22' [... ..] ú-za-a-an
 23' [... ..] É.GAL E.KI DÙ-uš
 24' [... ..]x EN.LÍL.KI a-na E.KI
 25' [... x-ta MU.AN].NA.MEŠ LUGAL-ú-tu DÙ-uš
-

col. II.

(lacuna of ca. 27 lines)

- 1' x [... ..]
 2' a-a-[um-ma^{lú}NUN]
 3' TA x[... ..]
 4' i-te-lu x[... ..]
 5' i-sa-ak-kip x[... ..]
 6' 3-ta MU.AN.NA.MEŠ [LUGAL-ú-tu DÙ-uš]
 7' pal-lu-uk-ku ù t[a-hu-mu (... ..)]
 8' a-na UN.MEŠ-šú ú-k[a-an (... ..)]
 9' EGIR-šú DUMU-šú <ina> AŠ.TE u[š-šá-ab]
 10' ul i-(erasure) (blank) [be-el(?) KUR(?)]
-
- 11' E₁₁-a^{lú}NUN ha-a[m-ma-'u ...]
 12' BAL-e Har-ra-an [... ..]
 13' 17-ta MU.AN.NA.M[EŠ LUGAL-ú-tu DÙ-uš]
 14' UGU KUR i-dan-nin-ma 'EZEN É.SAG¹.[ÍL ú-šab-ṭal]
 15' BÀD ina E.KI (erasure) [... ..]
 16' HUL-ti ana KUR URI.KI ú-ša-am-m[a-ar]
-
- 17' LUGAL KUR NIM.MA.KI i-te-eb GIŠ PA LUGAL i[-šab-bat]
 18' ina AŠ.TE-šú i-de-ek-ke-e-šu-ma
 19' AŠ.TE DIB u LUGAL šá <ina> AŠ.TE ZI-ú
 20' LUGAL KUR NIM.MA.KI a-šar-šú ú-nak-k[a-ar]
 21' ina KUR ša-nam-ma ú-še-šeb-šú
 22' LUGAL šu-ú UGU KUR i-dan-nin-ma [(..)]
 23' KUR.KUR.MEŠ ka-la-ši-na bil-tum [... ..]
 24' i-na BAL-e-šú KUR URI.KI šub-tum ni-i[h-tum TUŠ]

(cols. III and IV missing)

col. v.

- 1 [.. .. .]
- 2 [^{gis}ha]t-tum LUGAL.MEŠ [.. .. .]
- 3 [š]á a-bi-šú (blank) x-[.. .. .]
- 4 2 MU.AN.NA.MEŠ [LUGAL-ú-tu DÙ-uš]
- 5 LUGAL šá-a-šú^{lu} ša-re-[ši]
- 6 ʾa¹-a-um-ma^{lu} NUN-ʾú¹ [ha-am-ma-ʾu]
- 7 ʾZI¹-am-ma (blank) AŠ.T[E i-šab-bat]
- 8 5 MU.AN.NA.MEŠ LUGAL-[ú-tu DÙ-uš]
- 9 ^{lu}ERÍN.MEŠ KUR ha-ni-i x[.. .. .]
- 10 ZI.MEŠ u² [..]-ʾú²-tú² ú²¹[-.. .. .]
- 11 ʾ^{lu}ERÍN¹[.MEŠ-šú(?)]
- 12 [hu]-bu-ut-su i-hab-ba-t[ú šil-lat-su]
- 13 i-šal-la-lu ár-ka-nu^{lu} E[RÍN.MEŠ-šú (..)]
- 14 ú-kaš-šar-ma^{gis} TUKUL.MEŠ-šú Í[L (.. ..)]
- 15 ^dEN.LÍL ^dUTU (blank) u^d[AMAR.UD² (.. ..)]
- 16 DA ^{lu}ERÍN.MEŠ-šú (blank) GIN.[MEŠ]
- 17 su-kup-tu^{lu} ERÍN.MEŠ ha-ni-i ʾi¹-[šak-kan]
- 18 šil-lat-su ka-bit-tum i-šal-l[a-al-ma]
- 19 a-na É.GAL-šú ú-[še-reb]
- 20 ^{lu}UN.MEŠ šá lum-nu i-[mu-ru]
- 21 dum-qa (blank) [.. .. .]
- 22 lib-bi KUR [DÜG.GA]
- 23 za-ku-tú [.. .. .]
- (lacuna of ca. 25 lines)

col. vi.

(lines 1-6 broken off)

- 7 [.. .. . MU.AN].ʾNA.MEŠ¹
- 8 [LUGAL-ú-tu] (blank) DÙ-uš
-
- 9 [.. .. .] ú-tal-la-lum
-
- 10 [.. .. . ZI-a]m-ma KUR DIB-bat
- 11 [.. .. .]
- 12 [.. .. . KUR] ʾi-be-el-lu¹
-
- 13 [.. .. . DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ
- 14 [.. .. la mu-du]-ú la tu-kal-lam
- 15 [.. .. . E]N KUR KUR
-

- 16 [... ..] 1-*en tup-pi*
 17 [... ..^m] *mun-nab-tum*
 18 [... ..] *šá-tir* IGI.TAB
 19 [... ..] x GAR-*an*
 20 [... ..] x
 21 [... ..]
 (remainder lost)

Translation

col. I.

(beginning broken off; at least 25 lines missing)

- 1' [Words..... which are un]alterable
 2' [..... which are un]alterable
 3' [..... for poster]ity he left
 4' [..... of the] great [gods]
 5' [.....] he took heed and
 6' [.....] he saw.
-
- 7' [.....] in later time
 8' [.....] will be overthrown,
 9' [.....] will come to an end.
 10' [..... the ar]my of Assyria
 11' [.....] ... they will be purified.
 12' [A king ...] will set out,
 13' [..... from] Babylon he will set out,
 14' [the enemy] will be overthrown
 15' [.....ut]ensils he will carry off and
 16' [.....] he will go and
 17' [.....] he will seize;
 18' [.....] he will demolish,
 19' [.....] he will remove (?),
 20' [extens]ive [booty] he will bring into Babylon.
 21' [... Esagila] and Ezida
 22' [.....] he will decorate,
 23' [.....] the palace of Babylon he will build.
 24' [.....]x (of?) Nippur to Babylon
 25' [... For *n* yea]rs he will exercise kingship.
-

col. II.

(beginning broken off; ca. 27 lines missing)

- 1'
 2' A cer[tain prince/king will arise(?)]
 3' From(?) [.....]
 4' will arise [.....]
 5' he will overthrow [.....]
 6' For three years [he will exercise kingship].
 7' Boundaries and b[orders (...)]
 8' for his people he will c[onfirm].
 9' After him his son will ascend the throne,
 10' he will not [rule the land (?)]
-
- 11' There will arise a re[bel] prince [(.. ..)],
 12' The dynasty of Haran [he will establish].
 13' For 17 years [he will exercise kingship]
 14' He will be stronger than the land and the festival of Esa[gila he will interrupt.]
 15' A wall in Babylon [he will build].
 16' He will plot evil against Akkad.
-
- 17' A king of Elam will set out. The royal sceptre he will [take from him].
 18' From his throne he will remove him and
 19' he will seize the throne and the king whom he made rise (*ušetbû*) from the throne,
 20' the king of Elam will change his place.
 21' In another land he will settle him.
 22' That king will be stronger than the land and
 23' all the lands [will bring to him] tribute.
 24' During his reign Akkad [will live] in security.

(cols. III and IV missing)

col. V.

- 1
 2 [... the sc]eptre[?] of kingship .. [.....]
 3 of his father ... [.....]
 4 For two years [he will exercise kingship].
 5 That king a eunuch [will murder].
 6 A certain [rebel[?]] prince
 7 will set out and [seize] the thr[one]

- 8 Five years [he will exercise] king[ship]
 9 Troops of the land of Hani [.....]
 10 will set out (*pl.*) a[nd² ..].¹ *-ship*² *th[ey will² ...]*
 11 [his] troop[s *they will defeat;*]
 12 booty from him they will take [and his spoils]
 13 they will plunder. Later [his] tr[oops SOMEONE]
 14 will assemble and his weapons he will ra[ise (...)]
 15 Enlil, Shamash and [Marduk(?)]
 16 will go at the side of his army [(...);]
 17 the overthrow of the Hanaean troops he will [bring about].
 18 Extensive booty he will car[ry off] from him(!) [and]
 19 into his palace he [will bring it]
 20 The people who had [experienced] misfortune
 21 [will enjoy] well-being.
 22 The heart of the land [will be happy]
 23 Tax exemption [*he will grant to the Babylonians*]
 (lacuna of ca. 25 lines)

col. VI.

(lines 1-6 broken away)

- 7 [..... For x yea]rs
 8 [kingship] (blank) he will exercise.
-
- 9 [... *for kingship*] *they will be purified.*
-
- 10 [A king/prince will set] out and seize the land.
 11 [*For x years he will exercise kingship*]
 12 [*After him his sons*] will rule [the land].
-
- 13 [..... a secret/taboo of] the great gods.
 14 [You may show it to the initiated, but to the uninitiat]ed you must not show
 it.
 15 [It is a secret/taboo of Marduk, lo]rd of the lands.
-
- 16 [... in accordance with] one tablet,
 17 [... from the tablet of] Munnabtum,
 18 [according to the original] written, collated.
 19 [.....]
 20 [.....]
 (broken off; ca. 27 lines missing, most of it probably blank)

Comments

- 1.1'-6' As suggested by Grayson, I take these lines to be the introduction. The author says that he has received from "the great gods" (line 4') a vision, with predictions that are unalterable, which he has left to posterity, to which he paid heed (*i-qul-ma* from *qâlu*; suggestion M. Stol); or something of the sort.

The author apparently was supposed to be an astrologer from the late Assyrian period, because he 'foresaw' the fall of Assyria. The best candidate is the Babylonian astrologer Munnabitū, who wrote astrological reports to Assyrian kings in the time of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal and whose name is mentioned in the colophon (see below ad VI: 17).

- 7' *âr-kat* U₄-*mu*, "in later time:" the prediction starts here; possibly paralleled by *arkānu*, "later" in V: 13 (see below).
- 7'-25' These lines refer to the fall of Assyria and the rise and reign of Nabopolassar, as was suggested by Grayson (BHLT: 24) and Lambert (1978: 12). But Lambert added that "Nebuchadnezzar might be meant," and this was also the opinion of D.J. Wiseman (1985: 96). Since a substantial part of the beginning of column II is lost, the most probable option is to assume that Nabopolassar was described here and Nebuchadnezzar in the lost part of column II. Furthermore, the preserved parts of col. I seem to be more in line with the context. Troops of Assyria (10') are referred to as well as fighting within Babylonia itself (12'-13') and the city of Nippur is mentioned, which played an important role in the war between Assyria and Nabopolassar. The building activities concerning Esagila, Ezida and the palace can be ascribed to either king. But it would be difficult to explain why the author should have omitted the man who put an end to the domination of Assyria. Nabopolassar was considered an heroic figure in later Babylonian literature as witnessed by the so-called *Nabopolassar Epic* about his coronation (BHLT: 78-86).
- 25' The beginning of the line requires a verb belonging to the sentence of line 24'. This is vindicated by the fact that both lines are densely written and push up a little against the left edge of col. II.
- II.1' The lost beginning of the column, as argued above, will have contained elaborate 'predictions' about Nabuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) and a succinct reference to the reign of Evil-Merodach, two years of reign (562-560 BC).
- 2'-8' These lines refer to Neriglissar, who had assassinated the reigning king, his brother in law. He ruled three years and eight months (560-556 BC). The fact that he was a usurper is suggested by the phrase "a certain prince," a phrase which was used for Darius III in V: 6, the basis for my restoration of II: 2'. In lines 3'-5' reference may be made to his expedition to Cilicia, recorded in ABC chron. 6. In lines 7'-8' he is portrayed as a just king who protected the

borders of the fields of the Babylonian citizens, which is a positive value judgement.

- 9'-10' Labashi-Marduk, his son, was king for hardly more than a month, but did not rule the land effectively. He was a mere child and not many cities accepted his rule. The expression "he will rule the land" (*ma-a-ti i-bé-el*) occurs in a report of Munnabitu ("The king of Akkad will rule the land whenever he wants," Hunger 1992, no. 318: 4-5).
- 11'-6' There can be no doubt that these lines describe the reign of the usurper Nabonidus (556-539 BC). He rebuilt the city of Haran, reigned 17 years and built the 'Wall of Nabonidus.' The final verdict of his reign is negative: "he did plot evil against Babylonia," because the Akitu festival was interrupted (*ba-til*) for several years (ABC chron. 7 II: 6, 11, 20, 24), a fact probably referred to in line 14'. See also the *Verse Account*: ZAG.MUK *lu-ša-ab-ṭi-il*, "I (Nabonidus) will discontinue the New Year Festival" (BHT pl. 6 II: 11; cf. CAD B 176a). Strangely, Nabonidus' sojourn in Thaema in Arabia, mentioned in the chronicle and apparently the cause of the interruption of the festival, is not referred to in the Prophecy.

If we put the information of the chronicle and the *Dynastic Prophecy* together, it appears that the long absence from Babylonia in association with the ensuing interruption of the New Year Festival was judged negatively in Babylon and this view persisted into the Hellenistic period (*pace* Kuhrt 1990b).

- 17'-24' This section deals with the reign of Cyrus the Great. That Cyrus deposed the former king and settled him in another country is also reported by Berossus (Jos., *Contra Apionem* I.20-21; Eusebius, *Praep.Evang.* IX.41). Thus the statement of Xenophon (*Cyr.* VII.5.29-33), that the king died, must be wrong, or refer to Belshazzar, his son, who for years fulfilled many royal duties, without, however, ever bearing the title of king.

Grayson interprets lines 22'-24' as being unfavourable to Cyrus, but in my opinion incorrectly so. *Eli māti danānu* does not mean "to oppress," but nothing more than it says: "to be stronger than the land," i.e. that his seizure of power was successful. It is a neutral statement. The same was true for Nabonidus (II: 14). That it can also be the other way around is shown by an omen-apodosis in *Šumma izbu*: "the country will be stronger than the king and drive out the king" (CT 27, 32 K. 3865: r. 6; cf. CAD D 84a). To be a strong king is a favourable judgement and apparently the prophecy was favourable for this king. To rule all countries and to bring back booty from foreign countries are features of good kings. The final judgement must thus also have been favourable.

I admit that my filling of the gap in line 24' is totally contrary to Grayson, who translates here: "during his reign Akkad [will not enjoy] a

peaceful abode.” I consider Grayson’s translation highly unlikely. In the first place, the phrase *šubtu nēhtu ašābu* “to live undisturbed,” “to live in security” is always used affirmatively and is a standard apodosis in the omen literature (cf. CAD N II: 151-2 for the references). Secondly, in Nabonidus’ case his bad policy is also described in the affirmative. Lastly, Cyrus’ policy is in the extant cuneiform evidence treated as positive: he respected the cult of Marduk and saw to it that the New-Year’s Festival was observed. This is true, not only of the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account* of Nabonidus, which compositions may be regarded as Persian propaganda, but also in the Babylonian chronicle, which devotes a lot of space to the entry of the Persian troops after the retreat of Nabonidus. It stresses the fact that no interruption took place in the temple ceremonies: “afterwards, after Nabonidus retreated, he was captured in Babylon. Until the end of the month the shield-(bearing troops) of the Guti (i.e. the army of Gubaru, the governor of ‘Gutium’ = Gobryas, governor of a province on the eastern border of the Tigris, who had entered Babylon before Cyrus) surrounded the gates of Esagila. (But) there was no interruption (of rites) in Esagila or the (other) temples and no date for a performance was missed” (ABC chron. 7, III: 16-18). Afterwards, when Cyrus himself entered Babylon, “there was peace in the city while Cyrus spoke his greeting to all of Babylon” (*ibid.*, III: 19-20). Compare also the *Cyrus Cylinder* ll. 24-25, “the city of Babylon and all its cult centres I maintained in well-being” (Berger 1975).

An intriguing parallel is the liver omen YOS 10 17 obv. 9: *i-lu ze-nu-tum a-na ma-tum i-tu-ru-nim-ma ma-t[um šu-ub-ta]m né-eh-tam¹ [uš-ša]-ab*, “the angry gods will return to the country, the country will settle down calmly” (Jeyes 1989: 30). This is exactly what Cyrus had done according to ABC chron. 7, III: 21-22: “from the month Kislev to the month Adar the gods of Akkad which Nabonidus had brought down to Babylon, returned to their cult centers.”

No conclusions should be drawn from the fact that no regnal years are mentioned. There is no dividing line after line 24', so that the rest of the predictions or only the regnal years may have been written in col. III.

- III-V The columns III and IV, totalling *ca.* 100 lines, are lost. They must have contained predictions about the reigns of Cambyeses, Smerdis, Darius I, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, Darius II, Artaxerxes II and III, which is on average *ca.* 12 lines per rule.
- V.5 The king here presented is Arsēs, the son of Artaxerxes III Ochus. He ruled two years and was murdered by the eunuch Bagoas (Diodorus XVII.3.5-6). I assume that LUGAL.MEŠ here represents *šarrūtu*, as is the case with NUN.MEŠ in the Seleucid prophecy text LBAT 1543 obv.: 4': NUN 27 MU.MEŠ NUN.MEŠ DÙ-šú, “the prince will exercise rule (‘princeship’) for 27

years” (cf. Biggs 1967: 131). Whether Bagoas really was an eunuch is open to question. *Ša rēši* may simply mean “high royal official,” but also “eunuch” (cf. CAD R, 292-6).

- 6-8 Darius III indeed ruled for five years. He was a rebel. He took, according to Diodorus XVII.5.3, the throne with the help of Bagoas, who, however, was murdered later by his own protégé. Whether the word “rebel” is really in the break, is difficult to say. For Bagoas’ role, compare Briant 2002: 774ff.
- 9-13 In line 11 Grayson copied a part of MEŠ and *šú*, but these signs do not exist (anymore). There is a break in the tablet here.

The paragraph in question can only refer to Alexander and his Macedonian army. “The land of Hanī” is the ‘archaic’ or better ‘literary’ rendering of Macedon in late cuneiform texts (see comments on Text 3: 6). Alexander is referred to as such in the *Astronomical Diaries* as “who is from the land of Hanī” (AD I: 191, no. -328 left edge). The only strange feature of the passage seems to be that Alexander is not mentioned in person (unless he was mentioned somewhere in the break!). I consider Geller’s theory that Alexander the Great was skipped (Geller 1990: 5-7), and that Antigonus was meant here, unlikely. Alexander was too important a figure to be left out. It is odd to assume that Arses and Bagoas were more important for Babylonia, than Alexander. The phrase may refer either to the battle of Issus (333), or to the Battle of Gaugamela (1 October 331 BC), or to Alexander’s victory over Darius in general.

- 20-21 Cf. the planetary omen K 229 rev. 18: KUR *šá* HUL IGI HÉ.NUN IGI, “the land that has seen misfortune, will see plenty” (Reiner 1998: 177). Also *Prophecy A*, II: 3 and III: 3 (Grayson & Lambert 1964: 12-13).
- 22 Cf. the astrological report of Munnabitu: *ŠÀ-bi* KUR DÜG.GA, “the heart of the land will be happy” (Hunger 1992: no. 318: 2) and *Prophecy A* II: 3 (Grayson & Lambert 1964: 12): *ŠÀ* KUR DÜG-*ab*. The phrase, however, is very common.
- 13-22 These lines are problematical and several solutions are offered to solve the problem. Grayson assumed that the lines refer to the Battle of Gaugamela (lines 9-13 to Issus), and that, surprisingly, Darius III is portrayed as the victor. For this unhistorical depiction of the Battle of Gaugamela Grayson admits he has no answer (BHLT: 26). He assumes it to be “unlikely that the defeat of the Hanaean is already part of a real prediction,” since the traces of column VI “certainly seem to be describing three further reigns” (BHLT: 27, n. 14). That the lines refer to a fantasy success of Darius III against Alexander, however, has found wide acceptance (Sherwin-White 1987: 11; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993: 8-9; Ringgren 1983: 383; Marasco 1985; HEP: 883, 1076; Mehl 1999: 34; Scharrer 1999: 123). Consequently this text was interpreted as hostile to Alexander and favourable to Darius III.

This interpretation, however, must be erroneous, since the Prophecy correctly assigns five regnal years to Darius III; the scribe apparently did not expect a victory of Darius over Alexander. Hence, other interpretations must be considered. I shall return to the question below.

- VI.1-8 Hardly any doubt can be cast on the assumption that six lines are lost at the beginning. The traces of line 7 fit my restoration MU.AN.NA.MEŠ exactly. Part of AN (last vertical wedge), NA and MEŠ are visible. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure whose regnal years were recorded here. It cannot be excluded that it still concerned the future king discussed at the end of col. v. If real prediction started at v: 13, then the following reigns are fantasy reigns too.
- 9 Line 9 is hardly intelligible. It is strange that it seems to be a section between dividing lines of only one line. So it can hardly concern the reign of a future king. In addition, the preserved verb, *ud/tallalu*, is open to different interpretations. Grayson proposes D of *dalālu*, “to oppress” (CAD D 178; AHW 153, or *talālu*, AHW 1309, “hinstrecken;” Aramaic loanword *tll*, “umwerfen”) or Dt of *elēlu* (CAD E 80-3; AHW 197-8), “to be purified”. In this meaning, the word is used in the astral omen mentioned at the beginning of this article: “the son of the king will become purified for the throne but will not take the throne”, above p. 294; ACh Suppl. 2 Sin 23a: 24 = Rochberg-Halton 1987b: 341 and 346: 61). This was actually the fate of Alexander’s son Alexander IV.

The phrase may be taken as a parallel to I: 11', where it is used in the context of the end of Assyria and just before the rise of the new king: Nabopolassar (I: 12': [...] *ZI-am-ma*. In VI: 9 the word follows the end of a king and is followed by the rise of a new one (VI: 10: [...] *ZI-am-ma KUR DIB-bat*). Thus it is not a description of a reign at all, but a kind of prophecy for the later period, as in *Daniel* 12: 10: “many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.” In *Daniel* it is a reference to the people who suffered under Antiochus IV’s persecution (cf. 11: 35).

- 10-2 These lines cover the last predicted reign. It is a very short typology. Only basic information is given: someone “will set out and seize the land” and “they will rule” or “they will be extinguished.” The problem of the last verb, *ibellu*, is that it can be derived from *bēlu*, “to rule” (said of kings and gods, and used frequently in apodoses of omen texts or in astrological reports [cf. Hunger 1992: nr. 318: 5], though normally spelled *ibelū* in the plural), but also from *balû*, “to become extinguished; to come to an end,” which can be used to describe the end of a life, as in an Assyrian query for an oracle: “will Assurbanipal come to an end (*i-bal-la*) or will he escape from this rebellion?” (ABL 1368: rev. 1). If the word derives from *balû*, a spelling *i-bel-lu-ú* is to be expected, so that a derivation from *bēlu* must be preferred (suggestion M. Stol).

If this section is not a real prediction but a *vaticinium ex eventu*, it must refer to a king “who seized the land” after Alexander. Few kings or rebels fit this simple description. Only Antigonos and Seleucus are candidates. If “they will rule” is the correct interpretation of the last word, it could refer to the descendants of Seleucus (“his sons will rule the land”).

- 13-5 Start of the colophon. This is the usual reference to the secret character of sacred texts. Compare Borger 1957-71: 188-91; Hunger 1968: 13-14. See also *Daniel* 12: 9, “and he said, Go thy away, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.”
- 16-8 If read correctly, the colophon seems to indicate that it is a single tablet, not the beginning of a larger series of tablets. In that case the expression would have been *pīrsu reštu*, “first section” (cf. ABC chron. 1, IV: 39).

Munnabtum is a personal name, as was correctly observed by Grayson. But all interpreters failed to grasp the importance of this observation. Munnabtum is not a common name, and, as far as I know, it does not occur in any colophon or even main text of any other late Babylonian document. It is thus a very reasonable assumption to conclude that this Munnabtum is none other than the Babylonian astrologer Munnabitum of the 7th century, who is known as a reporter of astrological omens to Assyrian kings, probably Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, and whom we mentioned in the introduction to this article as the interpreter of celestial omens (cf. Hunger 1992: 177-181). His language even reminds us of certain lines of the *Dynastic Prophecy* (see II: 10' and VI: 12). It would have been an attractive idea to put the words of the *Dynastic Prophecy* into the mouth of this Munnabitum. He must have been a man of some standing, perhaps a writer of omen texts, adviser of Assyrian kings, and thus able to make a prophecy starting with the fall of the Assyrian empire. I have tried out the assumption that Munnabtum was not the author, but the (mythical) ancestor of the author or scribe, but that proved impossible. It would mean that line 17' would contain a phrase like: [PN₁ A-šú šá (or: DUMU šá) PN₂ A^m] *Mun-nab-tum*. But there is simply no room for this. It would require *ca.* 10 signs, but in view of the fact that the cuneiform signs of the name Munnabtum are stretched out, space for five or six signs is available at a maximum. My somewhat daring conclusion then is that Munnabtum is the ‘Daniel’ of the *Dynastic Prophecy*. Just as Daniel was a Jewish foreign diviner at the court of Babylonian and Persian kings, so Munnabitum was a Babylonian foreign diviner at the Assyrian court. Now, the connection between *Daniel* and the *Dynastic Prophecy* becomes even closer than assumed before. We may even ask whether the author of *Daniel* knew the *Dynastic Prophecy*, secret though it may have been. Despite the secrecy of the visions of Daniel until the end

of time, we nevertheless know them.¹² The rest of the colophon may refer to the owner or copyist of the tablet.

The Dynastic Prophecy, Babylonian wisdom and Alexander

The *Dynastic Prophecy* belongs to a category of texts, which are descriptions of the reigns of unnamed kings cast in the form of predictions. There are several texts of this genre¹³ and it is not my purpose here to treat this genre fully, particularly as a great variety of forms is distinguishable in it.¹⁴ The prophecies are normally explained as *vaticinia ex eventu*, but it has often been very difficult to find historical circumstances for the predictions in question and this has led to quite a range of possible historical interpretations. One of the solutions proposed is that the prophecies may contain *vaticinia ex eventu* as well as real predictions, as in the case of the *Uruk Prophecy*, which contains ‘historical’ predictions about Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings up to Nebuchadnezzar II, but starts with real predictions concerning the latter’s successor (Hunger & Kaufmann 1975: 374, rev. 16ff; Beaulieu 1993). The genre has a parallel in the biblical book of Daniel, which also contains prophecies about future kings and which also moves from *vaticinia ex eventu* into real prediction (in *Daniel* 11: 40ff.; cf. Lambert 1978). The *Dynastic Prophecy* is an exceptional case inasmuch as the question of which kings were intended here cannot raise any doubts, at least up to v: 13. Thus in this respect the *Dynastic Prophecy* has a closer link with *Daniel* 11 than with the other Akkadian prophecies.

Before arguing my case for the interpretation of the lines regarding Darius III and Alexander, I wish to look at the general concept of the *Dynastic Prophecy*.

It seems that the sphere of interest of the author is rather limited. His main interest was in the rise and fall of kings, and more specifically in the rise

¹² The name of Daniel, in turn, was adapted from the enigmatic ancient sage Daniel mentioned in *Ezekiel* 14: 14, 20; 28: 3 and known from Ugaritic texts. This does not matter very much, since in the book of Daniel he was simply a wise man at the court of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹³ *Prophecy A* (Grayson & Lambert 1964: 9-10), the *Marduk and Shulgi Prophecies* (Borger 1971), and the *Uruk Prophecy* (Hunger 1976: 21-23; Hunger & Kaufman 1975; Beaulieu 1993).

¹⁴ The prophecies have been discussed by Grayson & Lambert 1964 (with previous literature), Hunger & Kaufmann 1975, Höffken 1977/78, Ringgren 1983, Longman 1991 and others.

and fall of dynasties (cf. above p. 295). It is also found in the *Nabopolassar Epic* III: 5, “Bēl, in the assembly of the gods, [gave] the ruling-power to [Nabopolassar]” (BHLT 85). The idea can be retrieved from the recurrent use of verbs relating to rise and fall: *elû* (DU₆.DU), “to rise” (II: 4', 11'; [V: 6]); *tebû* (ZI), “to set out” (I: 12', 13'; II: 17', 19'; V: 7, 10; VI: 10); *ṣabātu* (DIB), “to seize (the throne, land or sceptre)” (I: 17'; II: 17', 19'; V: 2, 7; VI: 13; cf. II: 9'); *dekû*, “to remove (from the throne)” (II: 18'); *sakāpu*, “to overthrow” (I: 8', 14', II: 5') and *sukuptu*, “the overthrow” (V: 17); *gamāru*, “to bring to an end” (I: 9'); *samāku*, “to remove(?)” (I: 19'); *naqāru*, “to tear down, to demolish” (I: 18').

The second point of interest is the question whether or not the king was powerful or not and really master of the land: II: 10', 14', 22'-23'; VI: 12(?). Furthermore the traditional qualities of good, or at least successful, kings are mentioned: securing booty and tribute (I: 20'; II: 23'; V: 12-13, 18-19) and building or restoration of temples (I: 21'-13'; II: 15').

The *Dynastic Prophecy* is usually considered to be an overview of “good” and “bad” kings, but that is only partly true. Most reigns are treated in neutral terms and merely depict rise and fall, and the question whether or not a king was powerful and controlled the land of Akkad. Only three or four kings receive value judgements *expressis verbis*. They are: Nabonidus (“He will plot evil against Akkad,” II: 16'), Cyrus (“During his reign Akkad [will live] in security,” II: 24') and the enigmatic king of later times, who will bring well-being and tax exemption to the country (V: 20-23). He is the only king of whom it is said that the gods will go at his side (V: 15-16). Other kings may be judged on the basis of what they did, taking into account the moral values of the ancient Babylonians: good kings bring in tribute and booty (from conquered countries; at home they give tax exemption) and are righteous (Neriglissar: “boundaries and b[orders] for his people he will c[onfirm],” II: 7'-8'), bad kings are weak or ‘rebels.’ According to these criteria Nabopolassar was good, Amel-Marduk was bad (he was a loser), Neriglissar good, Labashi-Marduk bad (he was not master of the land), Nabonidus was bad (a ‘rebel’), Cyrus good (brought in tribute); Darius III bad (a ‘rebel’(?), and a loser).

To summarise: Nabopolassar, Neriglissar, Cyrus, the future king are good and successful, the last Assyrian king, Nabonidus, Darius III are rebels and meet their doom. Though only a minor part of the prophecy is preserved and of some kings only incomplete predictions are extant, it seems that especially the founders of dynasties are considered good and successful, while the last rulers are understandably unsuccessful. Nabonidus was a special case: he started a new dynasty (“of Haran”) and was successful (“he prevailed over [was stronger than] the country”), but was nevertheless driven out, since, it seems, “he plotted evil against Akkad.” The evil he plotted cannot be something other than that he

neglected the cult of Marduk and promoted the cult of Sin, as we have seen above. So this verdict still prevailed in the Hellenistic period.

It seems to me that the purpose of this composition is to give a view and a homily on the vicissitudes of temporal power. Empires come and go, dynasties rise and fall. This fatalism is nicely encapsulated in the *Lamentation over the Fall of Ur*:

“Who has ever seen a reign of kingship that would take precedence (for ever)?
The reign of its (sc. Ur’s) kingship had been long indeed but had to exhaust itself.

O my Nanna (moon god and patron deity of Ur), do not exert yourself (in vain),
leave your city!”

(ANET 611ff; Michalowski 1989: ll. 368-370; cf. Kuhrt 1995: 72)

In classical literature it reminds us of the lamentation of Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus after his destruction of Carthage in 146 BC:

“After being wrapped in thought for long, and realizing that all cities, nations, and authorities must, like men, meet their doom; that this happened to Ilium, once a prosperous city, to the empires of Assyria, Media, and Persia, the greatest of their time, and to Macedon itself, the brilliance of which was so recent, ...”

(Appian, *Punica* 132 = Polybius XXXVIII.22.1-3)

But for the author of the *Dynastic Prophecy* it was not all blind fate which determined the success of a dynasty or a particular rule. A favourable policy towards Babylon, in particular regarding her temple and its cult, her right to tax exemption, and possibly also the recognition of the city as a, or the, central city of the empire, might appease the gods, Marduk foremost among them. But even this is no guarantee for long life and everlasting success. The gods decide freely.

Let us now return to the enigmatic end of the *Dynastic Prophecy* concerning the fate of Darius III and Alexander (V: 13ff.). The major crux seems to be: who was the subject of *ukaṣṣarma*, “he will prepare for battle,” in V: 14? The other big problem is “the overthrow of the Hanaean army” in line 17. In addition, the phrase in V: 18 “his extensive booty he will carry off” i.e. “he will carry off extensive booty *from him*” is ambiguous: from whom was it taken? The same holds true for “his palace” in line 19: whose palace was it?

Let us start with the first problem. Grayson (BHLT 26) argued that the subject of *ukaṣṣarma* was Darius III. His argument was based on “the overthrow of the Hanaean troops,” which could hardly have been effected by Alexander or any other Greek or Macedonian. Furthermore, the verb is given in the singular,

while a plural (subject: “the Hanaean troops”) is expected. And, admittedly, Grayson has a point here. Nevertheless, I wish to argue that this point of view cannot be maintained for the following reasons:

1. It is simply not true. Darius III never defeated Alexander. One could answer to this, and it has been done, that such criticism is irrelevant. The composition is a prophecy, not history (Briant HEP: 883; *idem* 2002: 864). It could be propaganda or wishful thinking. Sherwin-White even points to the last Shah of Iran, who tried to deny the Greek domination of Persia after the Achaemenids (Sherwin-White 1987: 11; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993: 8-9). But that is not a good comparison. The Shah did not deny the fact that Achaemenid rule came to an end; he saw no Persian victory over the Greeks, but only tried to ignore the Persian defeat. The *Dynastic Prophecy* is very accurate and the author did not distort the facts anywhere else.
2. The author, in fact, did not deny, but even expressly wrote, that Darius’ rule came to an end after five years of reign. So he did not apparently reckon with the possibility of a victory of Darius over the Macedonians. Strangely, all commentators have overlooked this point.
3. The phrase *šillatsu kabittu*, “his(!) extensive booty” (thus in the singular, while a plural referring to the Hanaean troops would be required - in Akkadian idiom “his booty” always refers to the booty *from whom* it was taken) most likely refers to the king, who is mentioned earlier, i.e. Darius III.
4. The person who is the subject of lines 13-19 carries off booty and brings it into “his palace.” If the person, who has the gods on his side and is thus judged favourably, were Darius III, he would bring back booty to “his palace” in Persepolis. Though the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon was still used occasionally by the Persian kings, the main treasury was in Persepolis and the palace of the Persian kings was in Persepolis or Susa rather than in Babylon.
5. As I have argued above: a defeat would not fit the general worldview of the author of the *Dynastic Prophecy*. The reign of Darius III fell under the curse of the gods, so that his kingship was taken away and given to someone else, who consequently could be assured of divine support.

If Darius III is not the subject of line 13-19, who else could it be? In my opinion two solutions remain, and I must confess that I am not able to choose between them. The first is, that it was Alexander the Great; the second is that in line 13 ‘real prediction’ begins, so that no link with historical reality exists from that point on.

If Alexander was the successful king of v: 13-23, then he must be the subject of *ukaššarma* in line 14. The subject may be found at the end of line 13 as LUGAL ŠÚ, *šar kiššati*, “king of the world,” as he is called in the astronomical diaries (Text 1, AD I: 179, no. -330, ‘rev.’ 11). The point is that, in any interpretation, the scribe chose a new subject. The subject in the previous sentence

was plural and referred to the Hanaeans (Macedonians), the subject in line 13-14 is singular and refers either to the Hanaean king (which is a minor change) or, in Grayson's interpretation, to king Darius, who was the object in the previous sentence. The word order object – subject – verb is exceptional but not impossible. We see it in V: 5, "that king, a eunuch [will murder]." It is also attested in astronomical diary AD I: 179, no. -330 'obv.' 17', "the king (i.e. Darius III), his troops deserted him" (referring to the Battle of Gaugamela; Text 1), and in chronicle ABC chron. 7, II: 2, "Astyages, his army rebelled against him." This word order frequently occurs in the omen texts, with which the *Dynastic Prophecy* (as well as the *Astronomical Diaries*) has a close connection (Jeyes 1989: 41, quoting many examples, like *ummanam nakrum usannaq*, "the army, the enemy will subdue it," YOS 10 26 I: 26-27). So we could read here: "[His] arm[y, the king of the world] will assemble."

A favourable view of Alexander fits in with the cuneiform evidence concerning him. The four cuneiform records concerning Alexander discussed above do not fall into the category of royal inscriptions, which could be dismissed as propaganda. There is no hint of a negative view of Alexander. He is the foreign conqueror, but he respects the Babylonian rights and cults, as is especially clear from the astronomical diary (Text 1); he restores the temple of Anunitum and returns possessions to Esagila (Text 2); money is given by the palace for the rituals of Esagila (Text 3); people of the land give presents (Text 4).

There is more. A defeat of Darius was clearly portended by the irrefutable omen of a lunar eclips (see the introduction above), and this must have appealed to the author of the *Dynastic Prophecy*. All the more reason why he would have predicted doom for Darius. After Gaugamela, possibly described in lines 9-13, further expeditions are treated as a long chain of success. The ruler in question organises his army (*kuššuru* does not mean "refit", as Grayson translates, but simply "to assemble, prepare for battle," CAD K 261b), the gods are on his side ("at Babylon too he met the Chaldaeans, and carried out all their recommendations on the Babylonian temples, and in particular sacrificed to Bēl, according to their instructions," Arr., *Anab.* III.16.5), his expedition seems to have gone to the ends of the earth, and he indeed carried off extensive booty. This all fits Alexander very well. He took the Persian treasury and brought it after his expedition into his palace, i.e. the palace of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.¹⁵ Alexander himself could have been viewed as a new Nebuchadnezzar. Though he did not grant a general tax exemption to the Babylonians (he left

¹⁵ Alexander first conveyed the treasury of Persepolis to Ecbatana and left Harpalus in charge of it (Arr., *Anab.* III.19.7); later Harpalus took up his residence in Babylon (cf. Bosworth 1988: 243).

Asclepiodorus to collect the taxes, Arr., *Anab.* III.16.4), he allowed the Babylonian temples to collect their tithes. He may well have given tax-exemptions to members of the *kiništu* (temple council), as was later done by Antiochus III in Jerusalem.

The prophecy about Alexander's reign probably continued in col. VI. There is plenty of room for discussing his plans to rebuild the Babylonian temples and his fateful end: the king's sudden death. The paragraph then closed with the number of regnal years (VI: 7-8). Alexander is then no exception to the rule that the exact number of regnal years is recorded.

It should be noted that even successful and apparently blessed kings may die suddenly. *Prophecy A* records an extremely favourable reign in the same wording as our prophecy: "the land will rest secure, the heart of the land will be happy, the people [will enjoy] prosperity, the gods will ordain good things for the land," etc., etc, but the paragraph ends with: "but that prince will be put to the sword in a revolution;" (first side II: 2-8; Grayson & Lambert 1964: 12,14). In the omen mentioned in the introduction (p. 294) the king's luck "does not run out," nonetheless he reigns only 8 (var. 16) years.

Line VI: 9 is unintelligible, but can hardly describe a specific reign. It may in one line refer to the troubles of the succession. Line 10 may then refer to Seleucus, who "took" the land in 311 BC. The complete text may be then something like: "[later a king/prince will set] out and seize the land. [For x years he will exercise kingship. After him his descendants] will rule [the country]." The end, in this interpretation, resembles the end of the *Uruk Prophecy*, which is dated to the early Seleucid period by Beaulieu: "After him a king, his son, will arise in Uruk and rule the four quarters. He will exercise [ruler]ship⁷ and kingship in Uruk. His dynasty will endure for ever. [The king]s of Uruk will exercise rulership like the gods" (Beaulieu 1993: 44). Beaulieu sees in this phrase a hint at the emerging divine aspects of Hellenistic kingship. It may be found here too, in the exceptional divine support for the king in v: 15-16, which fits Alexander's aspirations.

How then should we interpret "the overthrow of the Hanaean army"? This is indeed a stumbling block to my interpretation and I must resort to extreme measures to remove it. The only solution is to assume a scribal error. I admit that this is a hazardous procedure, but it can be defended. The text contains more errors: there are at least three erasures (II: 10', 15'; V: 16) and two mistakes (II: 9, 19). In V: 17 the scribe omitted the determinative KUR ("land") before *Ha-ni-i*, although he used it in V: 9. My suggestion is that the scribe intended to write *Gu-ti-i* ("Gutians") instead of *Ha-ni-i* ("Hanaeans"). It would then refer to Alexander's victory over the Persian army. Gutians normally mean people living in Iran and further east and the term often occurs in chronicles and diaries as an archaizing term for eastern armies. Alexander's

campaigns were indeed an astonishing success. He came back to Babylon with an enormous amount of booty “from him,” i.e. the treasuries of the Persian king, i.e. Darius III. If Hani is replaced by Guti, the text does not raise any problems, while in every other interpretation inconsistencies remain.

An interpretation which follows the course of events even more closely would be as follows: V: 9-13 refers to the Battle of Issus, 13-19 to the battle of Gaugamela, which was actually Grayson’s original idea, though he assumed that the author intended to describe a Macedonian defeat here (BHLT 26). The points in favour of this reconstruction is that Gaugamela was a victory of Alexander over the Gutian *troops*. King Darius was saved, he escaped to the East; this explains the fact that the prophecy only speaks about a victory over troops, not about the destiny of the king. The immediate result was that Alexander had a favourable entry into Babylon, which would then be described in lines 19-23: he brought his spoils to the palace of Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander had a friendly reception in Babylon. Here the text breaks off. In this interpretation, in the following 25 or more lines of column V and VI: 1-8 Alexander’s campaign to India could have been described and his return to Babylon, which brought him doom.

Another emendation of the text one could propose is: *su-kup-tu* ^{lú}ERÍN.MEŠ <^{lú}>*ha-ni-i* ^{lú}i^l-[šak-kan], “the overthrow of armies the Hanaean (=Alexander) will bring about.” This would conform to certain apodoses of liver omens: *su-kup-tú* ERÍN.MEŠ GAR-an, “he will bring about the overthrow of armies,” or: “the overthrow of armies will be brought about” (BRM IV 12: 73; cf CAD S s.v. *sukuptu*) and would fit the context which actually is a chain of omen apodoses. ^{lú}*Ha-ni-i* as singular seems ungrammatical, but is attested in ABC chron. 13A (now joined BM 32310+32398+32384; cf. Glassner 1993: no. 36) obv. 12': ... *ana* 1-en ^{lú}*Ha-n*[i]-^{lú}e^l, “to one (= a certain) Hanaean.” Nevertheless, this interpretation is forced and not very likely.

If we wish to avoid assuming a scribal error, we have to consider whether another person was indicated, such as Seleucus I, as was advocated by Geller (1990) and Del Monte (2001: 146). The idea seems at first sight interesting. Seleucus defeated the ‘Hanaean’ troops of Antigonos, he was enormously successful, was seemingly popular in Babylonia and during his reign prices returned to a normal level (Sherwin-White 1987: 15; Van der Spek 2000: 294). However, many objections can be made.

The proposed reconstruction would present us with a strange transition from the defeat of Darius III in 331-330 BC to Seleucus’ victory over Antigonos in 311-308 BC. In Geller’s reconstruction Alexander is even skipped. The defeat of Antigonos would be mentioned without first introducing the contender. The phrase “his booty” in line 18 would then refer to Antigonos, which is impossible

in this context. It would also mean that Alexander was not given regnal years, while lesser kings such as Neriglissar and Arses have theirs carefully noted. Finally, all new kings, and certainly kings who overthrew their predecessors, are introduced with verbs like *tebû* (“to set out”), *elû* (“to rise”). Nothing of the sort is here, unless the verb *kuşşuru*, “to assemble, to prepare for battle,” serves this purpose. Furthermore, *arkānu* does not mean “later” in the sense of “in a much later period,” but rather: “(immediately) afterward” (cf. CAD A II: 273), “danach” (AHw 1467).

Other objections are, to my mind, the fact that “the overthrow of the Hanaean army” (v: 17) can, in the context of this section, only refer to the Hanaean troops of v: 9, the troops of Alexander. Furthermore, the Babylonians knew very well that Seleucus was himself a Macedonian and that Macedon was “his land” (ABC chron. 13: rev. 3, cf. Briant 1994: 463-6). Thus the introduction of Seleucus at this point necessitates a contrived interpretation of the paragraph.

If the prophecy continued with *vaticinia ex eventu*, then it is hard to see which king was intended in VI: 10-12. After Seleucus no one before the Parthians attacked and seized the land. Or is this the first ‘predicted king’? If so, it would be a poor apotheosis of only three lines.

I shall now turn to my second solution, for which it is not necessary to assume a scribal error or emendation, rather the prophecy starts here with real prediction and now turns to the gist of the composition. It would be a reminder to the newly installed dynasty from the land of Hani, that like the dynasties of Assyria, Elam (Persia), Haran (Nabonidus), ‘later (but soon!)’ this new power will also reach its end. A new king will come, destroy the Hanaean army and take “his” (this must be Alexander’s) booty. The future king will inaugurate a happy period for Akkad. The prophecy discusses his reign at length, continuing into column VI. Respect for the Babylonian rituals, rebuilding of the temples will have been the content of these lines.¹⁶

A further argument in favour of the idea that we are now dealing with real prediction, is the bombastic language, which is used from now on. While the former reigns were treated in a rather flat and dry manner, now for the first time the favour of the gods is expressly mentioned and lines 18-22 are literal quotations from omens. For many years to come this unknown king will

¹⁶ One might consider the idea that Bessos was seen as the destroyer of the Hanaean troops. If my interpretation of chronicle 8 (Text 3) is correct, Bessos was indeed known in Babylon. Yet, on the other hand, it is hard to see why Bessos would have enjoyed so much credit in Babylon.

exercise kingship (VI: 7-8). Here the ideal king is portrayed, and the message may be that Alexander can avoid his fate if he will act likewise. The remaining lines are difficult to explain, due to their fragmentary state of preservation. As argued above, VI: 9 cannot refer to any specific reign, and VI: 11-12 must be one more fantasy reign.

The idea of a real prediction was also advocated by Marasco, but in his view the prediction concerns Darius III. Marasco proposed two dates for the composition of the prediction: between Issus in 333 BC and Gaugamela in 331 BC (1985: 533), and after Gaugamela (*ibid.* 533ff.). But, as I argued above, Darius' five years reign came to an end after Gaugamela when Alexander entered Babylon. Hence, only the second option remains. But even if the prophecy were written in the brief time span between October 331 and July 330 (Darius' death) it is very unlikely that the author would have ascribed five years of reign to Darius, when he expected him to recover Babylonia. Thus I sympathize with his theory of real prediction, but it must concern an as yet unknown saviour and could have been written at any point up to June 323 BC.

The idea of the real prediction has been rejected, since "three further reigns" were assumed to follow (BHLT 27, n. 14; cf. Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993: 8f.). I do not understand the argument. It may well be that more reigns followed in the lost beginning of col. VI, but in the preserved section only one more reign was pointed to, and that in rather vague terms (ll. 10-12). This reign may be fictive as well. The description of the venerated future king may well have continued into col. VI: 8.

This interpretation leaves a number of questions open. Why was Alexander not given regnal years, while later kings were allotted them? How do we have to interpret *šillatsu*, "his booty," where "their booty" is required? Why refer to a next king "who will seize the land" following the predicted destroyer of the Hanaean army?

If, notwithstanding the problems mentioned above, the latter interpretation is correct, then the *Dynastic Prophecy* is negative for Alexander, or at least a warning. The ironical thing is, that while the cuneiform sources are not specifically negative about him, we have to turn to the classical sources for a negative Babylonian view of Alexander. It is they who report that 'Chaldaeans' (i.e. Babylonian astrologers and other diviners) predicted doom for Alexander, when he returned from his expedition to the East. It is reported by several classical authors (App., *Bella Civilia* II.153; Arr., *Anab.* VII.16.5-18.6; Curt. X.4.6; Diod. XVII.112; Just. XII.13.3ff; Plut., *Alex.* 73) that Chaldaeans went to meet him in order to prevent him from entering Babylon since by their divination they had learned that Alexander would die in Babylon. The *Dynastic Prophecy* may have been precisely this prediction. The point is, however, that

the classical sources do not breathe one word about a predicted (Babylonian) contender who would defeat Alexander's army and become king. They only predict Alexander's death in Babylon, while the Prophecy expressly avoids speaking of Alexander's death (although it may be implied). The discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the Greek authors wrote with the hindsight that Alexander *did* die in Babylon, and that they interpreted the Babylonian prediction accordingly.

Of the versions the classical sources present about the Chaldaean prediction, the one of Diodorus (XVII.112) is the most interesting. Diodorus probably derived his story from Nearchus, Alexander's fleet commander, who wrote a history of Alexander's campaigns. Diodorus is the only one to give a name to the leader of the Chaldaean delegation: Belephantes (XVII.112.3). Belephantes is evidently a corrupted name influenced by Greek popular etymology: *Bel* + *elephas* (-*ntos*) and personal names like Bellerophon and Diophantos. Nevertheless, it seems not to be off the mark to recognize here the Babylonian name Bēl-apla-iddin. As a matter of fact, we do know a Babylonian astronomer with this name who lived and worked in this very period. The diary of month I-VI of the second year of Philip (April–September 322 BC) was written by Bēl-apla-iddin, the son of Mušallim-Bēl, descendant of Mušezibu (AD I: 228-9, no. -321 'rev.' 27'). The same astronomer (or his brother) may have been mentioned in AD I: 202-3, no. -324A 'rev.' 15, as writer of the diary of month I-VI of the twelfth year of Alexander (April–September 325 BC). Bēl-apla-iddin is also known as the scribe or copyist of a Babylonian model for Venus and a procedure text for Mercury (Britton & Walker 1991: 110-111). The Mušezibu family was still active in astrology and astronomy more than two hundred years later (Van der Spek 1985: 548-555).

Diodorus is also fairly exact in describing the work of these Chaldaeans, "who have gained a great reputation in astrology and are accustomed to predict future events by a method based on age-long observations" (διὰ δέ τινος αἰωνίου παρατηρήσεως). Now the Greek word, τήρησις is a literal translation of the Babylonian word *našāru*, meaning "watch, observation," esp. "astronomical observation" (cf. CAD N II, 38-39 sub 5a). Diodorus uses this word also in his description of the Chaldaean profession in book I.28 (cf. II.30.2, 31.9). It is also used by Simplicius (*In Cael* II.12 [ad Arist., *De Caelo* 293a4]; see Heiberg (ed.) 1894: 506), when he wrote, quoting Porphyrius, that Aristotle asked his nephew Callisthenes to send him the Babylonian astronomical observations. Bēl-apla-iddin/Belephantes may have become a name known in Greece as well.

Secondly, the content of the prophecy is interesting. The leader of the Chaldaean delegation, Belephantes, did not dare to address the king himself, but secured a private audience with Nearchus, who later communicated the Chaldaean prophecy to Alexander (cf. Plut., *Alex.* 73). The prophecy was that

they had learned “by the prophetic power (*manteia*) of the stars (...) of the coming end of the king in Babylon” (Diod. XVII.112.2). They urged upon the king “that he must under no circumstances make his entry into the city; that he could escape the danger if he re-erected the tomb of Belus which had been demolished by the Persians and must abandon his intended route and pass by the city.”¹⁷ And Alexander did so: he sent most of his friends (*philoi*) into the city, himself passing by, and set up his headquarters in a camp at a distance of two hundred stades (ca. 40 km), probably to the south on the west side of the Euphrates (Plut, *Alex.*, 73). This is confirmed by Justin XII.13.4, who states that Alexander took up his quarters at Borsippa. However, upon the advice of the philosopher Anaxarchus (Diod. XVII.112.6; cf. Just. XII.13.5) he later disregarded the advice of the Chaldaeans and entered Babylon with his army. One advice of the Chaldaeans Alexander heeded: he ordered his troops to work as hard as possible on the removal of the debris of the temple (possibly the temple tower, the *ziggurat*, misunderstood by Diodorus as the tomb of Bēl) in order to facilitate its reconstruction. The favourable reception of the king seems to be confirmed by our Text 4: 5', where mention is made of “numerous gifts of the people of the land.”

Arrian provides a somewhat different account. After his campaign against the Cossaeans in the winter of 324/3 (Arr., *Anab.* VII.15.1-3), Alexander turned towards Babylon. “And when Alexander crossed the Tigris with his army on his march towards Babylon, he was met there (ἐνταῦθα) by the Chaldaean scholars, who drew him aside from the companions and begged him to stop the march to Babylon; it is said that they had an oracle from their god Bēl that his entry into Babylon would do him no good.” When Alexander declined, the Chaldaeans advised him not to look to the West and not to enter the city facing that direction, but rather to make a detour in order to make an approach facing East, thus entering the city through a gate in the western part of the city (Arr., *Anab.* VII.16.5-7).¹⁸ This would mean that Alexander could have entered

¹⁷ Belephantes' visit to Nearchus might well have been the origin of the legend that Xerxes destroyed the Babylonian temples, for which there is no cuneiform, nor any archaeological evidence, nor any support in Herodotus (cf. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987). Belephantes may have tried to provoke a positive attitude in Alexander, by stressing that the Persians, the defeated enemy, had destroyed the ziggurat, which apparently needed repair, and that Babylon had suffered the same fate as Athens. Finally, it is to be noted that Xerxes was killed two months after a lunar eclipse (Walker 1997: 21).

¹⁸ The passage was rightly understood by Smelik (1979: 93-94), but misunderstood by Brunt in his translation in the Loeb Classical Library (1976: 259 n. 5 ad VII.16.5) and

through the 'King's Gate,' a gate which may possibly have been a favourable gate in view of Alexander's royal status (cf. George 1992: 24, 141 for the most recent maps). According to Aristobulus (Arr., *Anab.* VII.17.5-6), Alexander did indeed try to follow this advice and enter the western sector of the city, but was prevented from doing so by the marshy conditions of the soil. He had the Euphrates on his right hand, so moved along the Euphrates northwards trying to wheel in a westernly direction in order to be able to turn round and enter Babylon looking eastwards. The region southwest of Babylon, between Borsippa and Babylon, was indeed marshy and full of pools (cf. Cole 1994: 96). So it was not primarily the advice of the Greek philosopher which changed Alexander's mind, but the condition of the country.

In sum: all testimonies point to only one possible conclusion: Alexander crossed the Tigris, was met by the 'Chaldaeans,' passed Babylon by, crossed the Euphrates and took up his headquarters at Borsippa, stayed there for a time, then tried to enter Babylon on the western side, but was prevented from doing so by the marshy conditions between Borsippa and Babylon, so crossed the Euphrates again and entered Babylon through a gate on the east bank of the Euphrates. The Ishtar Gate on the northeast side would be the normal way giving access to the Processional Road leading to the palace and the temple, but it could also have been the Marduk Gate, the Zababa Gate or the Urash Gate. Whether or not Anaxarchus' advice influenced Alexander's decision is hard to say.

A more important difference between Diodorus and Arrian concerns the motives ascribed to the Chaldaeans and their attitude towards the rebuilding of

Bosworth (1988: 168), who thought that the Chaldaeans advised the king to enter Babylon on the eastern side, which would have been nothing special, since Alexander was coming from the East. But Appian's version (*Bella Civilia* II.153) is very clear: Alexander was advised not to look to the setting sun when entering Babylon. Perhaps the setting sun mentioned by Appian was even more ominous to Alexander than the Babylonian astrologers knew, because there is a possibility that the sun was the heraldic symbol of the Macedonian royal house. This cannot be proved, but there are two pieces of evidence that point in this direction. In the first place, we should note that Perdiccas, the legendary founder of the Argead dynasty, claimed a special relationship to the sun (Hdt. VIII.137). In the second place, the symbol variously known as the 'star of Vergina' or the 'sun of Vergina,' must really be a representation of the sun. A close and almost contemporary iconographic parallel is the coinage of Uranopolis on the Athos peninsula, a town that was founded (between 316 and 300 BC) by Cassander's younger brother Alexarchus, who called himself Helios (Mørholm 1991: 60, fig. 75). Finally, it should be remembered that Alexander claimed to be the son of the Egyptian sun god Ra (pers.comm. Jona Lendering).

Esagila. In Arrian's version the Chaldaeans tried to avoid the rebuilding of the temple tower, because they allegedly feared that their income from the temple estates would be used for this undertaking. In Diodorus' version it is the other way around: the Chaldaeans urged Alexander to rebuild Babylon, by which pious deed he could avoid his fate. The last interpretation is more in line with the cuneiform tradition: kings are always urged to maintain the temples and kings are portrayed favourably if they do so. This is especially so in the description of the ideal king in the *Uruk Prophecy* (Hunger & Kaufman 1975: 374, rev. 14). This is also true for Alexander, as we have seen above. He did his utmost to restore Esagila by setting 10,000 soldiers to the task (Strabo XVI.1.5).

Alexander may have been suspicious of the Chaldaeans, but the story might equally well reflect the general suspicions of the Greeks towards Orientals and the Greek discussions about the value of divination (see the advice of Anaxarchus). It occurs to me that Alexander was not a particularly fine example of Greek rational thinking; rather he was a person impressed with the divine element in the cosmos, in history, and in his own person. His view of Babylonian divination is aptly expressed by Plutarch: "and his court was thronged with diviners and priests whose business was to sacrifice and purify and foretell the future" (*Alex.* 75). In this he was a true successor to the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. That Alexander took them seriously is also apparent from his behaviour: he made a difficult detour around Babylon and settled first in Borsippa in order to obey the instructions of the Chaldaeans. And even Anaxarchus may have acknowledged the validity of the predictions of the Chaldaeans when he was drinking to Alexander's health while mocking Alexander's divinity: "one of the gods shall be struck by a mortal hand" (Diog.Laert. IX.60, quoting Eur., *Orestes* v. 271).

Thus, my first inclination is to take the astrologers seriously. Could they not really have seen signs in the sky that might predict doom for Alexander?

As we saw in the introduction, lunar eclipses were considered important omens. From Assyrian scholarly literature and practice we know that lunar eclipses were so ominous that only these were dangerous enough to necessitate the performance of the substitute king ritual. Though the Assyrian experts thought that the ritual was needed in the case of eclipses of the planets (planets covered by the moon) as well, they are only reported in the case of lunar eclipses and indeed only in those instances in which the position of the planets was dangerous too, such as the absence of Jupiter (Parpola 1983: xxii). And since we may assume that a substitute king ritual was organised by the 'Chaldaeans' in Alexander's palace, we should expect a lunar or solar eclipse to have occurred in the spring of 323.

At first sight the Chaldaeans do not seem to have had a very good case. The last lunar eclipse in Babylon took place on 8 May 324 BC (14 Iyyar = II),

the last solar eclipse on 23 May 324 BC (29 Iyyar, i.e. exactly one Babylonian lunar year before Alexander's death¹⁹ and that is too early. The fate portended by the eclipse was to befall the king within 100 days from the occurrence of the eclipse (Parpola 1983: xxv).²⁰

On the other hand, the rules were not always adhered to so strictly. Some omens are supposed to be fulfilled within one year (see below). The eclipses of moon and sun on 14 and 29 Iyyar 324 BC must have impressed the Babylonian astrologers and they may have gathered that their fulfilment awaited the king's return to Babylon. The *Babylonian Astrological Calendar* portends for a lunar eclipse on 14 Iyyar: "The King of the World (LUGAL ŠÚ) will die, his reign (dynasty) will end" (Labat 1965: §74: 5), and for a solar eclipse in Iyyar: ["the kin]g, his days will be short. The land will eat abundant food" (Labat 1965: §81: 1). Note that Alexander was styled "King of the World" in the astronomical diary (Text 1). The omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil* foretells for a lunar eclipse in Iyyar in the evening watch (as was the case in 324 BC): "the king will die and the sons of the king will vie for the throne of their father, but will not sit on it" (*Enūma Anu Enlil* 17 §II: 1; Rochberg-Halton 1988a: 127).

Be that as it may, these omens had not come true yet, but signs to come might confirm them. It may well be that the Chaldaean *expected* new solar eclipses on 12 April and 12 May 323 BC. On these days partial eclipses did take place, but they turned out not to be visible in Babylonia. Babylonian astronomers were able to predict eclipses, but they could make minor mistakes, as is evident from the diaries. One example is on the 29th of Elul (= VI) 331 BC, i.e. five days after the battle of Gaugamela, a solar eclipse was expected: "Night of the 29th, solar eclipse which was omitted; (it was expected for) about 1° night after sunset" (AD I: 177, no. -330, 'obv.' 12'). It was indeed a minor mistake: a solar eclipse did take place, but it could be watched in Greenland and North America, not in Babylonia.²¹

¹⁹ Cf. Steele & Stephenson 1997/98; Steele 2000b; see also n. 2 above.

²⁰ According to some theories the term for the fulfilment could be extended: 100 days for an eclipse observed in the first watch, 200 days for the second and 300 days for the third, i.e. morning watch (cf. Koch-Westenholz 1995: 104ff). This conforms more or less to Greek theories: Hephaestion *Apotelesmatica* I.21.9, "if an eclipse occurs in the East and lasts for three hours until it clears, the indicated things will occur when three months have passed after the eclipse; if the eclipse occurs from the 4th hour and lasts for two hours till it clears, the indicated things will occur when six months have passed; and until the 12th hour, similarly, a year is decided upon" (Rochberg-Halton 1988a: 43 n. 53). The lunar eclipse of 8 May 324 BC, however, took place in the first watch, just after sunset.

²¹ Cf. Steele 2000a and n. 2 above.

Now, the solar eclipse expected on 12 May = 29 Nisan is particularly interesting in view of the omen connected with it in the *Babylonian Astrological Calendar*: “if in the [month Nisan the sun] establishes an eclipse: in that year the king will die and the land, which had seen evil, will see happiness (KUR šá HUL IGI SIG₅ IGI)” (Labat 1965: §81: 1). The remarkable feature of this omen is that it combines bad luck for the king with happiness for the land, nearly exactly in the phraseology of the *Dynastic Prophecy* (v: 17, 20-21: the overthrow of the Hanaean army, which might refer to Alexander, and happiness in the country).

The Babylonian scholars could also have expected a complete lunar eclipse. On 28 April (16 Nisan) 323 BC a full eclipse took place, but was not visible in Babylon. The same calendar produces startling omens again: “if in the month Nisan [the moon], at his first appearance, is eclipsed, there will be host[ilities]⁷, the king of the world (LUGAL ŠÚ) will die” (Labat 1965: § 75: 1). And: “if, in the month Nisan, the moon is darkened, the king of Akkad will die” (Labat 1965: §76: 1). Note that the ‘Chaldaeans’ prophesied that Alexander would die in Babylon, the residence of the king of Akkad.

Later in the year solar and lunar eclipses could be seen in Babylonia: on 7 October (28 Elul = VI) a partial solar eclipse in Libra, which is recorded in the diaries (AD I: 209, no. -322 A ‘rev.’ 13’), and on 21 October (13/VII) a full lunar eclipse in Taurus (diary lost). These phenomena could also be computed and they confirm remarkably the prediction of the 29th *ahu* tablet of *Enūma Anu Enlil* mentioned in the introduction to this article (p. 294), which portended the defeat of Darius III by a prince from the West who would be extremely successful, but reign only eight years. These eight years would end in October 323. The partial solar eclipse took place eight Babylonian years and four days after the battle of Gaugamela and the lunar eclipse eight years and one or two days after Alexander’s entry into Babylon. So if the Chaldaean astronomers knew this tablet (as they certainly did – they learned them by heart at school), they would fear that Alexander had only half a year to live when he returned to Babylon.

It is well known that the officials started prophylactic rituals against eclipses before the occurrence of the phenomenon, even on occasions when the sign ‘was omitted.’ This happened for instance in the 8th year of Cyrus in Larsa, when a kettledrum ritual was executed at an inappropriate time (Beaulieu & Britton 1994). The ritual from the Seleucid period for the observance of eclipses also starts before the eclipse begins (BRM IV, no. 6; Linssen 2002: 313; Brown & Linssen 1997).

Thus it may well be that the Chaldaeans advised Alexander to stay out of Babylon until after 28 April or 12 May, until the omens had manifested themselves. Apparently the omens were considered especially dangerous if Alexander were to enter Babylon or reside in Babylon. Some omens concerned

doom for the king of Akkad. Thus the policy of the Chaldaeans was to keep Alexander out of the city. When he, despite their efforts, took up residence in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, they had to resort to the second strategy: the performance of the substitute king ritual, which according to Arrian took place shortly before his death (*Anab.* VII.24.1; for the ritual see Smelik 1978/79: 100-7.) The story is poorly understood by the Greek authors, but Diodorus again seems to have the best interpretation: "Alexander referred the portent to the seers for interpretation and put the man to death in accordance with their judgment, hoping that the trouble which was forecast by his act might light upon the man's own head." (Diod. XVII.116.4). It may well be that the incident took place on May 12th, the day of the expected solar eclipse.

It should also be remembered that omens other than solar or lunar eclipses could foretell the death of a king. Conjunctions of the moon and planets were also dangerous, but none took place in the spring of 323 BC. However, the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* contained 70 tablets, which are not all extant and not all the extant are published. I have not investigated fully the possibility of other evil omens, but a few examples may be interesting.

"If Venus in month Iyyar (II) becomes visible in the West and ditto (= and the Great Twins and Little Twins, all four of them, surround her and she is dimmed); the king of Akkad will fall ill and not recover" (tablet 59/60 II: 14; Reiner 1998: 126). Alexander died from illness on the last day of month II. However, Venus had her latest first visibility in the West around 2 August 324 BC, when she was in Leo. In Iyyar 323 BC she was in Aries (courtesy M. Ossendrijver). Though Alexander died from illness in Iyyar, the astral constellation did not portend it.

"If Mars comes close to Jupiter, in that year the king will die" and "if Mars comes close to Venus, in that year within six months the king of the world will die" (Swerdlow 1998: 14). On 16 August 324 BC, Mars came close to Jupiter (0.6°) at sunrise, which could mean that Alexander had to die before 1 Nisan = 14 April 323. But on 30 December 331 BC Mars also came close to Jupiter and on 20 November 331 BC Mars approached Venus to 1° , yet Alexander, king of the world, survived.

If one takes the regularity of eclipses and other evil omens into account, it is a miracle that kings could survive at all. It is indeed surprising to see how often in Neo-Assyrian times substitute kings were installed: 679 (twice), 677, 674, 671 (twice), 669 (twice) (Parpola 1993: xxiii).

Thus the Chaldaean astrologers seem to have had ample opportunity to foretell the death of the king. They may well have been honest, but manipulation cannot be excluded. It is hard to see what advantage the postponement of Alexander's arrival could have brought to the Babylonian scholars. It seems to me that the most probable solution is to assume that they

really feared the solar and lunar eclipses of April and May 323, a year after actually attested eclipses which awaited fulfilment. They used it to exhort Alexander to deploy his troops for clearing the site of Etemenanki, the temple tower. By acting like a good Babylonian king and by accepting performance of the ritual of the substitute king Alexander might avert the destinies ordained by the gods, prolong his reign and prevent “the overthrow of the Hanaean army.”

I should like to point out one oddity. The Babylonian New Year Festival (1-11 Nisan) took place 14-24 April 323 BC. There is not a single hint in our sources that Alexander took part in the ceremonies. If Alexander had fulfilled his duties, it would certainly have been mentioned. How should we interpret this? A variety of solutions to the problem are possible. The first is that Alexander arrived only after 24 April 323. This would mean that Alexander’s stay in Babylon lasted a maximum of seven weeks. Alexander might have waited until 28 April, as suggested above. Another solution may be that the substitute king, who was ritually the real king, did the honours. Finally, one might consider the possibility that the physical participation of the king in the ritual had fallen into abeyance.

Conclusion: Alexander in Babylon

The Babylonian texts here presented are products of Babylonian scholarship. They are part of the Babylonian tradition of record keeping. The main concern of this scholarship was divination and record keeping served that purpose. It was a scientific undertaking and it had virtually nothing to do with depicting popular feeling. If value judgements occur, as in the *Dynastic Prophecy*, they reflect the view of Babylonian scholars, not of the man in the street. The Babylonian scholars were keen to preserve the temple and its rituals and they wanted to pursue their science. Alexander seems not to have had the intention to hinder their activities; on the contrary, I would say. This attitude emerges from the cuneiform as well as from the classical sources.

When the scholars predicted the end of Alexander on the basis of the stars, as reported by many classical authors and possibly by the *Dynastic Prophecy*, they need not have been negative about his policy. Even good kings could be stuck by divine wrath. It was their job to try to avert the destiny ordained by the gods; and they fulfilled it, though to no avail. On the other hand, at no time in history have scholars been unbiassed and free from interpreting things to their own advantage. They will have used their predictions for their own ends, in this case using Alexander’s army to restore the temple tower. And even this can be viewed as a disinterested advice. If one wishes to appease the gods, what better remedy is there than to provide for their temples?

It was not very difficult to get Alexander to do that; it had been his policy in Egypt (Hölbl 1994: 9ff., 69ff.) as well. The scholars may well have hoped that Alexander would make Babylon again the capital of an empire and thus revive the reign of Nabopolassar. That, too, might have been the message of the *Dynastic Prophecy*.

The opinion of Babylon's population remains a mystery for us, but we can make an educated guess. The change of dynasty will not have bothered them very much, if it could take place without bloodshed. Alexander's warm welcome by the Babylonian population may indeed have been orchestrated (Kuhrt 1990a). It is conceivable, though, that Alexander's conquest gradually became more an object of regret. The Greek governors Asclepiodorus and Harpalus were probably resented. They exacted high taxes. Harpalus emptied the treasuries to please his concubines. The garrison acted as a drain upon the food resources. As mentioned earlier, prices were extremely high under Alexander. The Babylonians may have welcomed Alexander again after his arrival from the East, since it meant Harpalus' departure. But they soon learned that the arrival of Alexander's troops in spring 323 aggravated the situation. His enormous army had to be fed.²² After his entry, Alexander planned gargantuan projects such as the erection of a gigantic funeral pyre for Hephaestion, for which part of the city and city wall were demolished. He built a big fleet and a big harbour for his expensive expedition into Arabia. He destroyed the *katarraktai*, a kind of barrier, on the river Tigris for military purposes (Briant 1986). The people may well have longed for the overthrow of the 'Hanaean' army. Last but not least: it must have been very awkward to have a beardless king. Babylonian kings always had beards and beardless persons were normally servants, eunuchs. Alexander must have seemed very effeminate in the eyes of the Babylonians. The Babylonians will not have been impressed by Greek civilization.

And Alexander? His private thoughts remain hidden for us. We can only judge what he did, not what he thought. It was his policy to respect local traditions. He did so in Lydia (Arr., *Anab.* 1.17.6), in Egypt (III.1.4f.), Tyre (II.24.6) and elsewhere. It is a normal policy pursued by conquerors. He had the example of Sargon II and Cyrus as regards Babylon. Though the policy is well attested, it is not self-evident. A king like Sennacherib showed little respect for Babylonian traditions from the outset of his reign (Van der Spek 1983). Alexander's policy must have pleased the Babylonian temple authorities and scholars, at least initially. Nonetheless, Alexander was no democrat. He was an

²² Was this perhaps the reason for the Chaldaeans trying to keep Alexander's army out at least until after the harvest?

absolute king, who ruled Macedonians, Persians and Babylonians autocratically, and indiscriminately (Fredericksmeyer 2000: 165).

What Alexander really thought of the Babylonians we can only guess from his deeds. Whether he had contempt for Babylonians or Babylonian wisdom (so Smelik 1978-9: 107-8) is difficult to gauge. But I would argue, *pace* Smelik, that Alexander was a very superstitious person, full of awe for the divine, full of weird ideas about his own divinity. He may have been suspicious of everybody, as autocratic rulers are. He may have been suspicious of the Babylonians for that matter. He may have had his doubts, fed by a few Greek friends, but he certainly did not dare to disregard the Chaldaeans' advice. His court was thronged with soothsayers; he did make difficult detours through marshy regions around Babylon; and he set 10,000 soldiers at work for the reconstruction of the temple tower. Babylon was to be the, or at least a, capital of his empire, whatever the Babylonian population might have thought of it. Alexander may have been impressed by Babylonian astronomy. Who knows whether he was not really impressed by Babylonian civilization?

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